

Fate Continuum

by SGTLEGENDKILLER

Category: Halo

Genre: Adventure, Sci-Fi

Language: English

Characters: Arbiter, Rtas 'Vadumee

Status: In-Progress

Published: 2012-01-01 06:30:30

Updated: 2016-02-29 23:41:03

Packaged: 2016-04-27 02:04:56

Rating: T

Chapters: 20

Words: 84,494

Publisher: [www.fanfiction.net](http://www.fanfiction.net)

Summary: Twenty years after the events of Fate Twister, D'rok Tallaham joins aid with Kan Retmaree to face a near forgotten series of events known as the Halo trilogy. Joining them will be SpecOps personnel Ryau Cinotee from the parallel Fic. LORC Book 3 of 5

## 1. Prologue

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Prologue: Same Name, Different Story

Human Calendar 7-7-2531

File Location: High Charity Data Library.

File Type: Document

Subject: Trial of D'rok Tallaham.

Starting Document

On this day the Covenant, remaining its glorious might, lost an unfortunate battle with the Human 'Parasite'. In the early hours of the day the planned scenario was initiated prematurely by 'paranormal circumstance'. Siberia, as the Humans had named the planet, was a Human stronghold; holding uncalculated supplies and reinforcing military vehicles.

The reason for defeat, strange as it may seem unrealistic, was put to blame a single Sangheili: SpecOp Major, D'rok Talahamee. Tallahamee was charged with unauthorized use of space craft, use of Human technology, and suspected heresy. Tallahamee had, according to

himself, indirectly alerted the Human defenses, leading to our eminent and slow defeat.

K'an Retmar'ee, a fellow SpecOp Major, along with Minor, G'rek Malak'ee, responded to D'rok's grounded craft. D'rok upon examination was found dehydrated, weak, and both physically and mentally exhausted. He remained silent and strangely stricken with a smile as, and even after the fact, K'an escorted him to the Cafeteria.

Once replenished and healthy he was taken to the court on High Charity. The great prophets of Regret and Solace tried against Tallahamee. The ruling was inconclusive, as the final decision was quickly changed once Talahamee informing the prophets of the failure and demise of the Arbiter.

The punishment was minor compared to its original severity; he would be branded upon his dominant hand with dishonor. Never again would he 'officially' be allowed to address his suffix. Finally he would be forced to hold his current rank until high council bid otherwise.

After receiving his punishment, D'rok chuckled simply. When asked why he replied that he just was happy. The prophets then informed him that he should be shameful. Before being escorted into a cell,

>D'rok replied defiantly: "why should I? We all hold shame, more you than I" <p>

\*~\*

>Jun19th, 2552 (Human Calendar) 0519 (5:19AM)<p>

D'rok sat up from his bed; setting his data pad next to him. He had just refreshed his memory on his long past trial. It was one of the few things he used to prevent forgetting where he had come from; of how he became himself.

He set his data pad down; finishing reading the verdict and explaining of his trial from long ago. Almost instinctively, he looked down at his bare wrist; his eyes slowly went over the scared brand on his skin.

He had already been up for awhile, as he always was early in the morning. With a sigh he got up from his bunk and stretched his tired legs. After quickly stretching the rest of his weary body, he walked over to the holo-reflexor window which rest clamped to the wall. He looked in an almost grim manner at the scar over his slightly squinted eye.

He began to do several series of exercises; a habit he had started even before gaining his Sangheili stature. After 20 or so minutes of this, he sat back on his bunk and checked his data pad once again. He almost doesn't notice the PDA telling him that he had a message in his "flood" folder. Seeing as this was nearly uncommon, he checked it quickly.

Surprising it was an email; this caused the quick question of how that was in the junk folder. Pressing his dominant index finger against the soft gel-esc screen, he opened the message and began to read.

CC: SM. Naki Cimutee

>Subject: Voluntary Help Needed<br>Date: ~June 18th 23:45~

><em>I am opening up a voluntary position for recovery of subject for a medical experiment, Special Operations preferred. It pays well. I will offer more information upon acceptance.<em>

>End<p>

With a soft 'hmm', he typed his response "\_Hello, Dr. Cimutee. I am Special Operations Major D`rok 'Tallaham, I am responding to your message, is there a location and time where I should meet you?\_"

2. Act01 Ch01 Mr Tallaham, i presume?

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>Chapter 1: D'rok Tallaham, I presume?<p>

Almost immediately he received a response and the location of her office. He thought she must have either just sent it or was desperately waiting, fine by him either way. With the information all sorted out, he dressed himself in a non-armored uniform, and began on his way to her office.

D'rok paced alone slowly towards her section of the ship; he knew well that he had a good amount of time to arrive. He walked tall and firm through the corridors, receiving as always a mix of different looks and stares. To many young warriors he was respected, as would any Special Operation Sangheili. Whereas a good portion of the more aged and experienced warriors who knew his 'shamed' name. Quite frankly he did not care what they thought.

Soon he stepped from the elevator onto the Special Operations Science and Artifact branch, after passing several door and stopping to look into a few unclosed windows at the random happenings, he stopped as he was met by a holo-projection of the name 'Cimutee'.

D'rok lightly pressed the 'page' symbol on the door controls and began to wait. It was not long until the door, which its white chrome finish was tinted red to indicate it was locked, turned a faint blue. The door opened revealing a middle aged female Sangheili in a white suit with the similar color of SpecOp minor lining the collar.

"Hello, I'm presuming that you are D`rok?" she asked quickly with a smile.

"Yes Miss Cimutee," D'rok answered softly, a slight and polite smile spread across his mandibles. D'rok was trying his best, which was not hard for him, to remain polite. He was a little skeptical of meeting anyone in the open so he quickly wrapped up introductions. "Would you mind if I took you to N`vek's?" He asked her in a gentleman like way; it still had not failed to take her by surprise.

"Oh," she was a bit surprised. "Of course, just a moment." She went back to her room for a moment. When she returned to him carrying a large case; D'rok took the quick mental note that it was a weapon

tote, exactly which it could be, he didn't get a chance to read. Due to the tote size it was most likely either a Type 50 Direct Energy Heavy Concussion Rifle or a Type 33 Light Anti-Armor Fuel Rod Cannon. There was a slight possibility it could be a Type 55 Guided Munitions Launcher, this was unlikely due to these quickly being outdated.

"Let us go," he invited calmly and waited till she had begun to walk before him. He quickly moved beside her as a sign of escort. At the elevator at the end of the hall he let her enter first then followed suit. Once the door closed he looked around quickly to ensure they were alone.

"I apologize for the sudden request, Miss Cimutee. I do not enjoy the fact of being watched in the halls and offices." He spoke softly, informing her of his paranoia "I know for a fact that there are cameras placed in every angle of the halls and offices. However there are safe places from their view; including the on board restaurant, personal sleeping and changing courts, and the latrines. To have a camera in those areas is violation of personal documented mandates."

"That is... alright, D'rok" She gave him a strange look.

The two exited at the floor and took but a minute to enter the Central Common Area and soon after the onboard restaurant, N'vek's Dinner. Once they had chosen a table, D'rok held her chair out for her and let her sit first. He sat with a smile, setting his hands on the table. Once they were seated they were given two cold glasses of water.

"So, Miss Cimutee, What is it you wish to do?" D'rok asked politely after a few moments of quiet

"Well, my project requires a test subject. A Demon" Naki told him as he sat up attentively in her chair

D'rok chuckled slightly as he set his water down upon the white silk tale cloth. "A Demon? That is a bit of a stretch, correct?" He gave her a strange, uncertain look.

"Well I read you killed one in your file."

He sighed. "That was, over... twenty cycles ago."

"Still, once you know, you don't forget. It's like a survival instinct."

"I would like to forget it..." D'rok raised his hand instinctively to the scar which lay over his right eye. "How is that supposed to be possible? They never seem to be asleep, which is strange, for human standards."

"Well that's why I'm giving you a heavy tranquilizer, enough to bring down a Mgalekgolo for a few hours."

"Will that pierce its armor?" He asked.

Naki hefted a Fuel Rod Gun onto the table. "That's why you use these first."

"...How did u get that in here? Surly your breast can not conceal that weapon," He smirked.

She seemed taken by surprise at his comment. "It's unloaded and I have authorization to carry it around."

"Well I recommend you put it away... I am not supposed to handle such weaponry around 'fellow' Covenant."

"Well that's why I have it." She answered, chuckling.

D`rok smirked "Well then it is not polite for table manners." Quickly she did as a waiter approached and they each ordered some Zupp Chau`Nia.

"So, how do you know so much about human patterns?" Naki asked, being genuinely curious.

D`rok grew slightly stiff; this was difficult topic to handle. It would be the first in quite a while "Anyone in my experience and position with have watched their enemies closely... the humans, as I've read on side of a black human craft, have a saying; 'Keep friends close and enemies closer.' I...assume I just pay attention," he smiled weakly, hoping to cover up.

"Hmm, very well." She said, but she didn't seem convinced.

He paused for a moment to think of a way to change the subject. "Are you... married?"

"No, but I do not wish to be, not yet that is."

"May I ask why? I'm curious," He leaned forward and locked his fingers together with elbows on the table.

"I am...waiting for someone I know to turn up" Naki told him quietly, her eyes lowered slightly.

D`rok gave a hearty laugh "The 'silent stalk' game I see. Hmm, what is your age?"

"I am forty-five if you must know"

He sipped his water. "I apologies, it is not my place to ask." Their food arrived and they talked a bit more and then D`rok turned. "It is a bit confusing to me..." He trailed off.

Naki finished a spoonful of the soup. "What is?"

"I don't know why, but I have the feeling that the title N`vek's is familiar."

"Hmm I don't know why but it's a popular restaurant all over Sanghelios."

"That is most likely it. I just ended my sixth tour of duty."

"Ah I know, I read your file." Naki said.

"Alright, what don't you know about me?" He closed his eyes. One thing that bugged him the most was people studying the Covenant's 'biography' of him.

"I only know of your military service, as far back as you seem to materialize out of thin air around the beginning of the war."

"You probably know my hoof size, correct?"

"No, I only glanced at your file"

"Yes, sure."

"And it was only military," she added.

"Very well," he paused and finished the soup. "When am I expected to retrieve the Demon?"

"The rest of the team that we have selected for combat leaves tonight, you will be with them." Naki informed him of more details and requirments

"And upon what human planet do I trespass my boot?" D`rok asked.

Naki stared at him for a moment, as if she was thinking distastefully behind deceiving eyes "The one we're orbiting."

"What is the name, doctor?" He asked softly.

"They call it Standard four."

"I have never heard of it." He paused, "well... it has been a delight, miss."

"Yes it was."

"I have..." He looked down at his watch. "Seven hours before I must depart."

"Yes you do, a Sub-commander will be in charge of the basic combat remember that"

"Sub-commander who?" He asked.

"I have no idea that was handled by the Ship Master."

"Alright," he stood up. "Thank you, Miss Cimutee, I will handle the bill."

"Very well see you later." He took her hand and kissed it politely and the two separated off their different ways.

D'rok paid the lunch meal, which was a dainty 35 Credits. It was only three hours of his hourly salary. SpecOp Majors were paid nicely, almost as much as the Ultras. Beside this point, D'rok went back to his room and changed into some work wear and answered an email from his longtime Friend, K'an.

He walked down to the stern-side section training room. This is what

would be considered a large, indoor gym to humans. There were weights, several sparring rings, and other equipment to build strengths and other attributes.

Upon arriving there D'rok was met by a happy K'an Retmar'ee with a grinning handshake. The two have been friends since before their 'incident' that only they knew about. D'rok, to this day, could hardly remember K'an's human name; Mike Brook. Thought D'rok hated his forgetting mind, he understood at the same time that 25 years is a long time for anyone, especially the 'wonderful' war filled 25 years they had experienced together.

Their time together for recreation was over before the two friends knew it, for they both were taking place in the invasion. Unfortunately they would not be assisting each other due to D'rok would be dropping to the planet with another platoon.

D'rok stood near his drop pod, ready for the invasion. He quickly placed his Plasma Repeater in his pod and turned to look at the pair of Jackals which watched him from a distance. He gave a quick nod to them and backed into his pod. D'rok had bartered with those Jackals; they were collecting a piece of hardware for him.

\_My project requires a test subject. A Demonâ€|\_her words echoed in his head as his pod door slide down, shutting tightly as it passed through the floor. D'rok closed his eyes as several memories danced in his head.

He was not looking forward to this invasionâ€|

### 3. Act01 Ch02 Touch Down Standard

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Chapter 2: Touch Down, Standard.

(loadout: 4 plasma grenades, secondary: Fuel Rod Cannon. Primary: Plasma Repeater)

Sremm Vakrelee Dialogue: \_"They should be... need one... primarily the Demon."\_

\_"Hold your fire, hold your fire! Damn Unggoy almost killed it. Major go with a group of the useless runts and retrieve that Demon."\_

\_"Be very careful of our precious cargo, Unggoy; they want it alive"\_

(Major Sremm Vakrelee, SpecOps Major grade 3 D'rok Tallaham)

\_May 30, 2552 5:20PM\_

D'rok's pod struck the dirt with a slight jerk; he then waited a few seconds for the hatch to fall forward. He uncrossed his arms and gripped the rim of the opening and pushed himself out. He took a glance and found that another Sangheili pod had arrived close by, and there was a pair of Heavy Orbital Insertion Pods landing a bit

farther from D'rok's pod. The other pod opened and a Major jumped out, this confused D'rok a bit, he shook it off though as he pulled his Plasma Repeater and Rifle from his Pod. D'rok turned back to the Major and approached him as D'rok clipped his Plasma repeater to his back.

"Greetings, Major. I suppose the Commander for this Operation is late." D'rok stated as he placed his Rifle onto his hip.

"I am the Commanding Officer on this operation, and don't question it!" The Major aggressively snapped his answer at D'rok.

"Perfectâ€|" D'rok muttered as he turned away and rolled his eyes. It would be the case he is stuck with a cocky youth.

D'rok's HUD flashed slightly and gave a low beep. In the lower left corner of his helmet visor several Unggoy names appeared. D'rok whispered \_'AHI organize names by species and rank'\_ in Sangheilian. Quickly the names flipped and swapped to the right order. On the top lists one Heavy Unggoy by the name of Gre'coy.

"Unggoy!" D'rok called them loudly, waving them over as he took a step closer. They quickly came to him and waited for him to speak, watching him intently.

"Goodâ€| if you will pay attention I will instruct you on what you are going to be doing on this operation" D'rok began to tell the six of them; three of them where Minors, two where Majors, and Gre'coy was the only Heavy. "Do any of you have trouble with mountainous terrain and snow?" He decided to ask before continuing; however he was elbowed aside by the Major.

"I, Major Sremm Vakrelee, am commanding this operation. Any questions, which there won't be" Sremm snarled as he spoke this "will be referred to me. Now here, one of you must carry this" Sremm held up a Fuel Rod Gun and dropped it into the arms of an Unggoy. The Unggoy, who was a minor, looked at him in feared disbelief.

"Sremm, you are making a mistake" D'rok advised him wisely.

"What did you just say?" Sremm looked over at him sharply.

"I told you that you made a mistake. That Grunt is of Minor rank; he is not qualified or trained to handle such weapons" D'rok informed him politely.

"As are you, D'rok Tallaham" Sremm retorted violently, referring to D'rok's court trial.

"That may be," D'rok replied remaining calmly. "That is not the case here however." D'rok stated as he took the Fuel Rod Gun from the Minor and handed it to Gre'coy.

"I told you to not question me" The air grew tense as Sremm turned to fully face D'rok, who was still turned away. D'rok sighed.

"I will question if I wish too, I report directly to Naki Cimutee. I will not allow you to make stupid errors which will threaten the success of this operation. And I will most defiantly not stand by as



you abuse your soldiers as cannon fodder. That is where I stand, and I stand pretty strongly, I will have you know."

"How dare you speak to me that way! Heretic! Traitor!" Sremm exclaimed loudly, running his mouth.

D'rok turned to face Sremm; Sremm was a bit taller than D'rok, maybe even equal strength, but he was not as experienced as D'rok; this was clear. D'rok did nothing but calmly stare back into Sremm's piercing eyes, creating a challenge. Sremm drew his sword.

"How childish of you, must you draw your weapon unnecessarily?" D'rok chuckled

"Unnecessary? Insubordination is a crime, and so is heresy."

"What of the fact that I outrank you, major?"

"That- that means nothing! You are not deserving of rank, you should have been banished!"

"For self-preservation? For wishing to continue my service to the Covenant?"

"You..." D'rok's statement caused Sremm to stand there stupidly with no smart insulting reply; leading the standoff into a stalemate.

As it would seem, Sremm would not be beaten, as he activated his energy sword and gave a charging growl. Sremm took two steps and began to ready a swing at D'rok. Instead, D'rok delivered a lightning fast sucker-punch strait to Sremm's face. Sremm was lifted from the ground from the blow until he landed flat on his rear several feet away.

D'rok picked up Sremm's dropped sword and turned the blade off. From then he approached Sremm, who was still on the ground, nearing the loss of consciousness. D'rok put the sword hilt on his other hip and grabbed Sremm by the chest plate. With a silent grunt, D'rok lifted the Major and shoved his backside into the sidewall of one of the Heavy Orbital Insertion Pods.

"Let's get one thing strait here, Major" D'rok started with a snarl as he looked into Sremm's eyes as they glared back in a less aggressive manner. "I will not deal with this for the entire operation. You may be in charge but you are like every young Sangheili officer: you think you run the Universe itself and strive for every ounce of 'honor' you can achieve. That is why I think you are really on this little trip: To get a chance to kill a Demon and achieve greatness." D'rok paused "It needs to be alive, and you are not going fight me for the goal of this Op, I am doing it. Don't you forget that! Understand?"

Sremm didn't answer, instead he looked down.

"Look at me, Major!" D'rok tightened his hold on him "Lesson two; your sword. Seeing as you most likely came from a family with a Father who was an Ultra or other high rank officer, you were bestowed your family's sword" D'rok made this assumption due to a family crest being on the hilt. "For father didn't seem to teach you the Sangheilian Honor code, or maybe you didn't listen" D'rok exclaimed,

raising his voice to a barley aggressive tone.

Sremm looked up at him now more uncertain to be afraid of to answer D'rok.

"'A drawn weapon demands blood'" D'rok quoted the Code. "It will not be my blood, Major." D'rok gave Sremm a push, Sremm fell to the dirt once again. D'rok took Sremm's sword and turned it on.

"What- What are you doing?" Sremm screamed as D'rok placed his hoof onto Sremm's chest plate and put his weight into it to hold him down.

D'rok raised the sword to strike; quickly he swung downwards at Sremm. As he swung down he stopped the blade in the range of an inch from Sremm's face. This left Sremm staring with widened eyes at the steady blade tip for several seconds.

"I forgotâ€¦| your blood is not honorable enough to be spilled with your previous attitudeâ€¦| I suggest fixing it." D'rok began to draw the sword away from Sremm "Next time I won't be so nice. Always rememberâ€¦|" D'rok deactivated the blade once again, and tossed the hilt onto Sremm's chest

"Two can play the asinine game" With a chuckle, D'rok turned and left Sremm in the dirt to gawk at himself and to lay embarrassed beyond anything he had seen before.

D'rok paid no further attention to Sremm, he had made his mark hopefully, and maybe Sremm would remember it in the future. After that until Sremm returned to his own sanity, D'rok informed the Unggoys of the Op plan and the setup of the mission.

June 1, 2552 1:15AM

D'rok stood under the branches of an evergreen; the snow covered branches of the evergreen gave him the perfect cover. The only thing that would be slightly visible would be the lite blue lights of his internal armor systems. He looked out the scopes of his binoculars, currently they had the heat sensor on with night mode on, watching for anything. His helmet rest hung to his hip on the weapon's clip.

"'\_AHI change internal armor temperature to 65f'\_" D'rok said softly with a short exhale, quickly his suit inside began to cool.

"Why in the gods would you do that?" The voice of Sremm came behind as the Major ducked under a branch to enter the shielded room that the snow covered branches made around the base of the tree.

"It is to conserve power, Major." D'rok answered without looking from his lens.

"Our armor is efficient for entire weeks-"

"We may be out here for that long, Major. Do you ever plan ahead?" D'rok sighed in annoyance. "Hold onâ€¦| Major take a look at this." D'rok held out the lens to Sremm.

Sremm looked through it, through the lens he could see a Human

Vehicle slowly driving through the forest. "This means what?" He asked D'rok stupidly

"That is a Human military vehicle, known to them as a Warthog"

"There are only two Humans inside, no big deal" he retorted casually

"Look again, the one in the passenger seat is larger than a normal Human, it is a-

"Demon!" Sremm cut him off and stood quickly to ready his sword.

"Wait! Stay calm. I will wake the grunts, be not careless." D'rok went to leave, putting on his helmet "oh yeah, and pay attention, the only way this will work is if you obey me"

D'rok left the hollow and jogged to the Unggoy, who were sleeping in another hollow, and woke them. Sremm was surprisingly listening to D'rok, he was quietly walking towards the Unggoy's hollow as they woke, and his Needle Rifle was drawn. Quietly in the shadows they hid as the Warthog passed by the hollow they were in.

As it passed, D'rok waved Gre'coy closer "I want you to hit the front of that vehicle on the driver's side. Ok? They should be alright, but we need one alive, primarily the Demon." D'rok requested, kneeling next to Gre'coy.

"Yes Sir!" Gre'coy exclaimed enthusiastically due to the fact he could now do something.

Gre'coy fired a single shot as the Warthog had turned back around and stopped in the snow. The Warthog noticed the Green bolt slowly bearing down onto them and the driver reversed in vain as the Fuel Rod slammed, as D'rok had requested, into the driver's side hood.

The Warthog exploded in a bright flash, the Driver died, as expected, whereas the SPARTAN passenger was thrown a good distance away into a snow drift under a tree. D'rok quickly left the group

"Hold your fire, hold your fire! Damn Unggoy almost killed it. Major go with a group of the useless runts and retrieve that Demon." Sremm shouted at them.

D'rok rushed up quickly to where the SPARTAN had been thrown, the Unggoy where dragging behind him. D'rok noticed that the SPARTAN was attempting to pull a grenade from its pouch. D'rok then took the grenade after stepping on its arm and tossed the unarmed grenade into the snow behind him.

"Be very careful of our precious cargo, Unggoy; they want it alive" D'rok warned them. At that point the SPARTAN seemed to have passed out. "Major, hail for a Phantom" D'rok ordered Sremm.

After waiting several minutes one did show up finally arrived and D'rok was the one to carry the SPARTAN over his shoulder onto the Aircraft. He received several astonished looks as he did, but he did

not care. As for what the good doctor needed a SPARTAN for. He was confused on that matter, but hoped it wouldn't be dissecting.

#### 4. Act01 Ch03 Welcome Back to Varo, Major

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Fate Continuum

Chapter 3: Welcome Back to Varo, Major

\_June 14th, 2552 7:20AM\_

\_Aboard the CCS class Mercy and Betrayal\_

D'rok sat up from his sheets slowly, gently rubbing his waking eyes. His mandibles spread widely in a yawn as he stretched his stiff body. He glanced lazily at the clock next to him on the wall; seeing as the time was an ever so late 0720hrs (7:20 AM) he turned himself to the side of the bed. He rested his arms on his knees as he lightly put his hooves against the cold metal floor.

Before he could do anything else in the few moments he had been awake, the Mercy shifted abruptly, causing D'rok to become tense. The ship soon again became calm. This was the worst part of slip-space travel: The sudden stops and take off jerking. Though it is announced, D'rok assumed that he had missed that due to him oversleeping.

"Mercy and Betrayal, this is the SSTC. Welcome to Sangheilios, warriors. Shuttles will arrive in a moment when you dock." Female voice announced over the PA system.

After a few moments cheering could be heard from several bunking barracks around his private room. It was the cheering of fellow Sangheili warriors seeing their home world for the first time in several years. D'rok smiled and got up and stood near his window port. The sight of the calm planet made him smile more than he had already.

After D'rok took some time to soak in the Sanghelios beauty as the Mercy began to approach an awaiting space station, he went back to his bunk and began to pack his belongings. He then waited for the Mercy to dock with the space station. He stepped out of his cabin to watch his fellow SpecOps as they rushed out the barracks and said their 'so longs' to their comrades.

"D'rok?" One of the younger SpecOp Majors asked as D'rok had begun to walk across the busy hall to retrieve his armor. D'rok recognized him as his other longtime friend, Sig Valhamee.

"Yes?" D'rok turned on the other side of the hall to face Sig.

"Will you be free tonight? May I have the pleasure of your presence at the Kli'gar Tavern in Varo?" He smiled brightly, he was happy to be home once again.

"Maybeâ€¦ I am not one for drink however"

"Alright then, may the gods be with you on your sojourn to home"

"Thank you Sig, take care of yourself" D'rok finished with his armor and returned to his room.

Once packed, D'rok left his belongings in his room to check to see if K'an had packed or left his bunkhouse to get on a planet bound transport. D'rok turned the corner into the bunkhouse hall and almost ran into a fellow SpecOp Major.

"Excuse me, I didn't see you there" D'rok quickly apologized and backed himself to the door.

Pressing the holographic display, the door quickly opened and D'rok entered quickly as he watched the SpecOp Sangheili he had just bumped into rounded the corner from sight. He had entered the room fairly quickly, for he wished to leave quickly so he did not miss the last Phantom going planet-side. However, he stopped immediately in his tracks as he found himself in the awkward situation; he had walked in on someone.

That someone was a female Sangheili. He had entered the wrong room, he realized this as before him she was finishing pulling her shirt down over her head. She stood in front of the room's holo-reflexor. While D'rok was lucky enough to make it backwards one step towards to the door, she looked up at his reflection in the Holo-reflexor as she finished with her shirt.

"Oh gracious Gods!" She swiftly turned to face D'rok; her back pressed against the Holo-reflector and her hand lay clasped over the necklace she wore.

"Apologies miss, for I was trying to find my friend's room." D'rok quickly said, taking a further step from her.

"How did you get in here?"

"I simply opened the doorâ€¦" He quickly answered; this could turn bad if she was married. "Again, I apologize for intruding. It was sheer accident"

She gave a slight blush and she chuckled "that is alright, Major. Now if you pleaseâ€¦"

"Yes Ma'am, have a pleasant return home." D'rok left quickly out her door.

As he stepped from the room he stood for a moment to exhale softly in pleasant embarrassment. From there he checked on K'an's room, which K'an was leaving already, then back to his own room where he grabbed his things and walked to the nearest Varo-bound Phantom.

The entire ride down to Sangheilios D'rok stared blankly at the floor between his hooves; he was thinking of that female he had walked in on. Stupidly he did not catch her name, but he had taken a mental picture of her.

D'rok had just recently begun to look for another woman. He had made this decision around the time of his 50th birthday two years prior.

He had given up on ever seeing Morgan again, though her memories still haunted him from time to time. D'rok had just one day decided that she was dead; there was nothing he could do. He was willing to move on.

D'rok shook his head and looked over to his left out the window. The Phantom was flying over a deep blue ocean. A smile grew on his face, this would be the first time D'rok had seen Sangheilios in nearly 5 years. The sides of the Phantom lowered down, opening to reveal a wide view of the Kar'un Ocean to the onboard warriors.

The Sangheilios around D'rok cheered out of pride and honor of their successful trip home. The Phantom lowered its altitude to just a few meters above the waves below. Most of the Warriors moved closer to the opened sides to feel and smell the ocean air, as well as the occasional ocean spray that result of upward waves and down force propulsion of the Phantom. Soon the mainland could be seen. Soon the Phantom, which was accompanied by several others, was coasting above land; the onboard passengers looked out over the towns and rural areas as the drifted above them.

Before D'rok knew it, the Phantoms had touched down at the Zelso Space Port. D'rok waited calmly as his fellow passengers rushed off to meet loved ones and to get out of the spaceport. Dressed in his casual clothing, which was a Denim material which made an essential pair of jeans and a black tee shirt, against the armored and uniformed Sangheili who were exiting the Phantoms, D'rok stepped down from the side lip of the Phantom and set his things down. The spaceport was rapidly becoming less dense with population after a minute or so, D'rok always did wait for the area to clear before trying to go through security.

As the spaceport lay nearly empty, all but a small group of remaining Sangheili around the open Phantom Bay. D'rok took a step away with the breeze of the Phantoms behind him which were blasting themselves back into the skies. To the nearest checkpoint he traversed casually, as he approached the checkpoint guardsman smiled at him and opened the item desk shield to allow D'rok to place his things on. As he did, he stood tall and smelled the moist air in relief.

"The Varo air smells pleasant, doesn't it?" The Checkpoint guard asked with a chuckle.

"Yes. Yes it does." D'rok smiled as he turned to the Checkpoint guard.

"Very well name?"

"D'rok Tallaham, age 52; Special Operations Major grade II" D'rok answered as well as added all the needed information.

"This not your first time here? How long have y been enlisted?"

"This is the end of my sixth tour of duty"

"And you are but a Major?"

"It is complicated" D'rok shifted

"Ahâ€¦ I shall not ask then." The Guard paused to hand D'rok his things. "Welcome back home Major" The Guard smiled then turned back to his terminal.

D'rok took his things and set them nearby on a bench and sat down with his S'thramm 573IN PDA, checking his email quickly then browsed through his checkbook. D'rok noticed soon after a commotion at the Checkpoint nearby; he glanced up to see the Female Sangheili he had walked in on earlier having an argument with the Guard. It would seem he would not let her through, which is not surprising to him, due to the fact it was federal law that it was unlawful for a Female Sangheili to leave or enter ship and spaceport without written or physical permission and documentation from their husbands or male caretakers. This law was not followed in the State of Zelso; however issues came up depending on the current guard's standpoint, which clearly he was giving her a difficult time.

D'rok set his PDA down on the bench and began his way over to the Checkpoint.

"Please sir, let me through! I must get home" she argued.

"No, I won't allow you to pass, you must go back to the ship" The Guard answered without emotion, D'rok assumed he was against female equality.

"Let her be, she is with me." D'rok ordered the Guard and received a strange look

"Hrmpf. If that is so, place you're your signature here" The Guard told him with a snarl and looked away. D'rok signed the holographic tablet and the Guard let her through.

She quickly passed through and set her bags near his. "thank you, ummâ€¦"

"D'rok Tallaham"

She blushed slightly "D'rokâ€¦ thank you" She paused "My name is M'riana Casmee"

"It is nice to meet you. Do you need anything else?"

"No, I will be fineâ€¦ thanks again" She looked down at her bag and pulled out a brown wool scarf for herself. As she did, D'rok couldn't help but give a surreptitious look of her.

M'riana was a fairly young and attractive Sangheili; she held the age of 48, the Human equivalent of 24 years. She was properly proportioned for her just-under average height of 7'6" (2.28m Sophie :3). Her soft skin was of light tan color; hidden underneath was a devious muscular build. Her face was clean and she proudly was in no need of the assistance of any make up. Her dark brown eyes set softly in contrast with her lightened cheeks, which rest atop her tucked and dainty mandibles. Resting loosely over her skin was a long sleeve jacket covering a clean, dove white blouse. The Jacket cover just over her strong waist, overlaying her grey sundress which hangs several inches passed her first forward facing set of knees.

M'riana stood facing D'rok; she extended her arm forward to him to

shake hands.

"I almost forgot, please forgive my absent manners. Thank you so much for helping."

D'rok took her hand lightly and brought it to his lowered face. Closing his eyes he softly put her knuckles against his lip for just but a moment. Looking back to her beautiful eyes, he freed her hand.

"The pleasure was mine. Thank you for making my presence meaningful." He smiled softly.

Her cheeks flushed purple in a great blush as she looked down in embarrassment

"I shouldâ€¦getâ€¦ home, D'rok" she told him as she grabbed her bag from the bench.

"Goodbye, M'rianaâ€¦ Farewell." D'rok grabbed his belongings as she left and then he left the bench for the Vehicle Holding Service.

Upon arriving to yet another checkpoint, D'rok received his vehicle registration and keys. From there he left his things and began his way into the underground vehicle parking; his vehicle was in the deep, lower levels of the parking complex. Soon he arrived to his desired level; U24 of 25, each lever where five meters in height.

He finally reached his vehicle, which was a decommissioned Type-48 Light Weapons Carriage Revenant; the vehicle was a weighty price of credits even before D'rok had it painted its current metallic black instead of the orange red. He chuckled at what he parked next to it: A brightly colored Ghost, its top hull piece was painted a red color, giving the Ghost the appearance of a rubber duck.

The owner of Ghost, who stood next to it proudly listening to music, was a young male, most likely fresh from a first tour of duty and feeling invincible, as D'rok would assume. The young male watched D'rok with a slight smirk of contest.

"Is that yours?" the youth asked D'rok nodding to D'rok's Revenant

"Yes, why?"

"Wellâ€¦" the youth chuckled "as someone states that vehicle is a tank, it is not meant literally. It mustn't be able to lift itself from the ground!" He sneered with a smile.

Without a word, D'rok spun his keys around his finger and sat in the Revenant's soft seat. Placing the key slowly into the ignition, the Revenant began to whirr about and soon its bulk graciously lifted to a calm hover.

From the storage compartment D'rok retrieved a pair of dark tinted goggles and placed them on his face; the bridge of the lenses rested on his lip and secured by a clip in the section of lip just above his mandibles.



D'rok looked over at the youth, boot still on the pavement. "You may think your 'child's toy' is worthy of praise, however I fail to see a method of carrying a female with only one seat." He smirked "the jest is on you"

With a chuckle D'rok pressed the Revenant's throttle and took off up the ramp towards the surface. As he stopped at the checkpoint and left the Revenant idle to reclaim his things. When he once again checked with the guard and the guard gave him his held mail which had accumulated over the year during his duty.

Opening his box of mail he shifted through his letters and opened another box within. In that box was a trio of ribbons for his services. Quickly D'rok noted this in his notebook to remember for later.

D'rok put away his journal and places all of his things safely in the Revenant and took off onto the roadway. Ironically he made it down the street only to see none other than M'riana walking along the road. With a slight chuckle he throttled back the gas pedal and stopped beside her.

She stopped and stood looking at him in disbelief." Would you like a ride, Miss?" He smiled.

"I get the strangest feeling you are following me, D'rok" She admitted as she entered the passenger seat.

"Not at all, Miss. Where is it to which I get to take you?" He asked and received an address; it was unfortunately a good two hour drive.

Through the first 15 minutes of the drive, M'riana was quiet, only looking over at D'rok every so often. D'rok couldn't decide if she was embarrassed or scared or nervous.

"Are you hungry?" He asked her in attempts to break the silence.

"Iâ€¦" she paused "Yes, but you don't have to worryâ€¦"

"Yes I do," He chuckled "it's alright, I'll pay. I won't get to close" He assured her. Quietly she changed her mind.

Soon the two sat at a small table by the beach, on the outside edge of Varo's main fishing market. D'rok sat back in his chair watching M'riana as she watched over the harbor with a soft purr; her hand lay clutched over her necklace as if to reminisce upon something.

"Where are you from, M'riana?" D'rok asked curiously as a pair of seagulls pecked at a nearby Sangheilian Ret Net crab.

"Ohâ€¦ nowhere specialâ€¦ out west in the countryside." She answered with a smile "You?"

"I'm from the Northern city of U'dan. I was raised like any other." He chuckled as he finished his made up cover story.

"I grew up with a wrench in hand. I am working on arms crafting."

"Ah so that is why you were on the ship; you were apprenticing the Weapons Master"

"Yes" She blushed

D'rok gave a slight blush as well. To hide it he looked down at the table smiling. This caused her to giggle. He smiled as he looked back up at her; very softly he began to purr. He wasn't usually this vulnerable, but he had not been with a woman for many, many years. He did not want to offend her somehow. It amused him however; he was very happy, happier than any other time in a very long time.

D'rok came back to Sangheilios as their food had arrived at the table. She had ordered some basic soup and meat, D'rok had ordered a large bowl this several live fish that were all around the size of his primary index finger, Fre'tuskic. Fre'tuskic was a strange fish which held the bodily shape of an eel, yet possessed the pinchers and legs of a crab.

"This fish is trickery" D'rok explained knowledgably at her glance at his strange dish.

"I've never seen anyone eat that before."

"It is challengingâ€¦ most tend to kill the fish then eat it; that is the wrong way to eat it."

"How then?" She leaned forward onto the table, showing interest.

"You take the fish like this" D'rok took one of the fish by the tail fin and lifted it from the bowl. The fish gave struggle as it tried in vain to pinch D'rok's fingers. "Then you stun the fish, like so:" D'rok flicked the fish on the thick scale which provided protection for the fish's skull. The fish hang in D'rok's fingers limp due to the loss of consciousness. He then swallowed the fish whole.

"Just like that?"

"Just like that, yes. If you do not do that, the fish's scales emits a foul chemical upon demise that irritates throats." He smiled "would you like to try?"

She blushed and gave a guilty smile "yes" she answered and D'rok carefully pushed his bowl closer to her.

She took a fish and held it like he had. She watched it nervously and waited several moments. When she went to flick this fish it pinched her finger with one of it's pinchers. She let go of the fish and yelped, the fish landed with a thud on the middle of the table. Quickly D'rok rapped the fish's head with his knuckle.

"Are you alright?" He asked her

"Yes..." She said looking over her finger.

"Here, it is ready." He lightly picked up the now limp fish and offered it to her.

"Thank you" She took it and eat it, she seemed pleased.

The two continued to eat and lightly converse. Just as D'rok was finishing a soft cool breeze began to blow in from the bay waters. With a glance D'rok noticed a wall of dark cloud moving steadily inland several miles from shore. Almost in unison, shops in the nearby markets began to close down and tighten up their windows for an imminent storm.

"M'riana, we should leave momentarily. It is still a great distance from your home and the sun is going down soon." He reminded her and nodded to the dark orange horizon.

"You are right it is almost 8:30" She admitted.

As the two reentered D'rok's Revenant it began to sprinkle already as the front of the storm clouds drifted into the air above. D'rok pressed a button on the Revenant console and a curved sheet of glass pushed out from the hood shell of the vehicle and over their heads, sealing to create an enclosed cabin above and to their sides. D'rok quickly accelerated as the Revenant turned westward back onto the main road which ran along the coastline.

Even as D'rok got onto the highway, rain had begun to heavily riddle the glass. After almost an hour of traveling the weather had taken a turn for the worst; lightning streaked across the sky before the loud claps of thunder in the stormy sky. The rain fell nearly in a horizontal manner with the gusting winds against the metal of the Revenant. D'rok continued down the road until a large tree was discovered laying across the highway. D'rok, not seeing a way around the obstacle, paused for a few moments only to turn back around towards Varo.

"where will we go, D'rok?" M'riana asked, showing her concern.

"We passed my home a few units ago, I shall provide shelter there for you." he ensured her as he pressed down the Revenant's boost thruster; the afterburner lit aflame and quickly propelled the heavy vehicle quickly back east.

Soon D'rok drifted the Revenant at an angle into his stone driveway; the vehicle lowered gracefully to the ground, setting itself gently down.

"M'riana, let me take you in first. Is that alright?" She nodded in response

D'rok opened the Revenant's glass shield and rushed to M'riana's side as the two hurried to the door of D'rok's stone house. In the brief time it took D'rok to fumble with his keys, they had both become soaked completely. As the door was opened, D'rok put his arm behind her to ensure she would safely enter his home. Once inside, D'rok shut the front door, locking it as well, before he led her to his living room. He soon started a roaring fire withing the fireplace and handed her a blanket as he sat by her side.

She, unable to help herself from it, stared at the floor; her cheeks were flushed purple in a blush. She found herself moved by his acquaintance; she was having a hard time believing the fact she might be finding herself falling for him. She liked him greatly she

realized, as she looked up at him. Her eyes sparkled with the reflection of the nearby fire. With a purring smile, she moved closer to him and happily delivered to him a soft kiss.

## 5. Act01 Ch04 A Long Awaited Pro

SGTLEGENDKILLED~

Fate Continuum

Chapter 4: A Long Awaited Promotion

\_July 27th, 2552 7:37AM\_

\_Tallaham Residence, Varo, Sanghelios\_

D'rok had been awake for around an hour already in the cool morning; the bedroom rest silent without the interference of unnatural things in which clutter everyday life to interfere the peace. It was quiet enough that the songs of Sangheilian Pyrahma birds could be heard from outside. The Pyrahma was very common in Varo and the mid-northern parts of Sanghelios. For being a flight worthy bird, the Pyrahma strangely seemed to prefer to be closer to the soil, even to the strange point of making nests in burrows. Inside the burrow the brown and orange feathered bird would house young and store food during the cold seasons.

D'rok sighed with a silent exhale as his mind returned from its short but peaceful distraction. His sigh was silent to avoid bothering his still sleeping partner; M'riana, who sleep peacefully against him; hidden from the cold by blanket and D'rok's arm around her waist. He would have already been up and most likely running if not for her as he woke everyday around 5:30AM on a usual day. D'rok put his cheek on her shoulder softly and embraced her warmth against his aged skin. The two had been together for all but two and a half weeks, from that stormy night in fact. Through several outings and dates together they had decided that they were in love with another and wished to go deeper than acquaintances. After many nights spent at D'rok's house M'riana, with D'rok's help, moved in with him. To humans most would say that this would be too fast, but one must take into the fact that female Sangheili almost have never have a say with the man they marry due to male domination in Sangheilian culture; M'riana truly loved D'rok, and he would not hesitate to admit he held the same feelings for her. What they held together on Sanghelios would be called a "Free Relationship", a relationship where the female has freedom of choice; this was uncommon anyway.

M'riana groaned softly as she began to wake. D'rok lifted his head and looked down at her as she turned hers back at him. Her eyes were almost closed as she wrinkled her lip under her nose holes as she stretched her opening mandibles. She began to purr as his eyes locked with hers and a soft, cute smile grew on her face.

"Heyâ€|" She groaned slowly.

"Good morning, my sweet" D'rok spoke softly and kissed her slowly.

"I love you" She whispered into his ear and hugged him, purring

louder as she soaked in his body heat.

After a short snuggling session D'rok stood up from the bed and walked over to the opposing wall of the bed and to where the brown wooden dresser rest on the soft tan carpet. On top of the dresser lay a white lace sheet which covered the dark markings of the flat wooden top. The several inches of each end hung down over both of the lipped sides of the wood top. Holding the lace sheet steady was a pair of candle holders, each with a pair of half burnt candles, and a mirror on a sturdy metal stand. In the far right wall corner was D'rok's data pad which lay on its flat placement charger. The data pads screen was faded almost to being off and a red light flashed on the edge of the device at an eight second interval; indicating that there was an awaiting email for him.

Lightly D'rok took his PDA from the flat charger, sliding his finger across the screen, unlocking the display to view his message. The title read; -URGENT- from the sending address of Special Operations High Commander R'tas Vadumee.

T: Special Operations Major D'rok Tallaham

F: Special Operations High Commander R'tas Vadumee

S: Wednesday, July 27th 2552

\_URGENT\_

Msg:

After much deliberation I have managed to convince the Great prophet of Mercy to allow you, after many years of dedicated service, to achieve rank higher than your current rank of Major. You will be advancing to the rank of Special Operation Officer Grade II. Due to your heightened authority and responsibility you will have been given with the rank of Officer, you will be required to run and command an operative team of warriors.

Tomorrow at 0800hrs your Promotional ceremony will be held at the Varo Military Academy located in west Varo where I will personally deem your rank to you.

-Special Operations High Commander

R'tas Vadumee

D'rok stood in a silent stupor, his mandibles hang a gap in a sudden front of disbelief; he was unsure of how to react. His head was swirled with a strange taint of mixed joy and uncertain. It was truly a bizarre and unprecedented happening; D'rok was unprepared for it. He has spent his many years in service with the chance of advancement vacant from his thoughts, but now he stands unprepared on how, leading to an improvised and instinctual smile across his mandibles.

"Oh my" M'riana stated softly as she hugged his arm. She stood next to him holding his right arm at the elbow where it hang comfortable for her height; D'rok had not noticed her before in her reticent move from the bed to his side. "I thought you said you couldn't advance."

"I didâ€¦" He admitted "I assume it was about time to raise the trial standings once again." He smiled.

"It is tomorrow, I won't be busy." She smiled, looking up at him

"But you have your weapon apprenticeship then."

"D'rok, do you think I would miss this?"

"I would hope notâ€¦" he admitted with a blush. She hugged him with a soft, embracing purr.

The next day D'rok walked with a strong sense of pride as he escorted his companion up the main steps of the Varo Military Academy. He wore his freshly cleaned armor, its black metal surface shined reflectively as it was handsomely polished earlier that morning. The only part missing from the set of armor was the helmet, which D'rok preferred not to wear due to visual restraints; this was optional wear for formal presences. M'riana wore her best dress she possessed; its red satin lengths hung beautifully at her ankles. As they reached the top end step he waited a moment for her to drop her politely held dress; she looked up at him smiling, he returned the smile with another short pause as he admired her clean beauteous face.

From there he escorted her further inward to the ceremonial theater, leading her to her seat. They exchanged a quick kiss and an embracing hug then M'riana sat in the front row quietly to avoid interrupting the current ceremonies taking place. D'rok stood behind the stage patiently; there was a mass of other Sangheili of various ranks being called out by name to the stage to be awarded.

It was quiet behind the dim lit backstage area; the only noticeable sounds were the inaudible ramble of the awarders and the honorable cheers from the crowds. As the numbers of waiting warriors diminished, D'rok found he was standing alone far from the group. Near the group there was a Sangheili of the Ultra rank standing against the cold gray wall across the room from D'rok, he was clearly watching D'rok. While the Ultra to the others would look as if his purpose was to insure a safe passage to the podium, however there was something strange about him; if D'rok moved the Ultra's eyes only followed with a hard lock.

D'rok denounced his suspicion but he did not make himself unaware and careless. He stood towards the center of the room not far off of the group and remained there. D'rok watched as even few other Sangheili remained, D'rok would be the last to be called out onto the podium. D'rok looked back as he returned to the wall with his previous stance; his eyes met the Ultra's blue illuminated helm eye pieces. The Ultra nodded slightly as if to cut the tension of the air and make up. D'rok saw this as a challenge to his apprehension and would see none of this misgiving neutralization; he simply bared his teeth with the intimation of aggression. At last D'rok was called onto the podium; he passed the Ultra with clenched fist and stood just in the shadows off the podium.

"Would D'rok Tallaham approach the stage" The name speaker called.

D'rok leisurely stepped out to the center of the well light stage as he was supposed to. He stood in a proud stance; his head remained unturned to the spectator seats which by this time were nearly empty. There was a moment of uncertain pause in the theater.

"Would R'tas Vadumee please rise to promote this warrior" the speaker spoke again.

R'tas stood from his nearby chair and approached D'rok. As R'tas stopped and turned in front of D'rok, D'rok crossed his left arm over his clean chest plate in salute to him. R'tas watched into D'rok's green eyes for a moment then gave D'rok a nod to signal to end his salute. D'rok dropped his arm back by his side and continued to wait.

"D'rok Tallaham will be receiving the rank of Special Operations Officer and will be enrolled in the next Covenant campaign." The speaker finished.

R'tas retrieved a suit of armor from a rank to his right and then handed it to D'rok. Once D'rok held the armor R'tas saluted him. There was a small cheer from M'riana and a few children of the few in the theater. The lights over the spectator sections dimmed slowly to being off and the speaker and the small handful of seated Sangheili advisers began to leave, soon they left D'rok and R'tas on the stage. D'rok glanced over at R'tas just as he was about to leave the stage, he stopped seeing as R'tas looked as if to speak further.

"Hold on D'rok, I have one further thing for you." R'tas stepped closer and held out a small black case to D'rok. "Here" R'tas told him as he held it out in polite offering.

D'rok set his new set of armor on the wooden floor at his hooves and took the case. He unlatched the elegantly polished steel hinge latch of the case and slowly lifted the top. As he opened the case a small bar flipped from the top on dual arms to a point on which a light, which was fixated on the bar, shown light onto the bottom section, revealing its contents. In the bottom side rest, safely snuggled within a pre-formed velvet imprint, a Type 1 Energy Sword; the graceful curved handle of the weapon was freshly clean, like D'rok's armor, and polished as well. Its shine from the light seemed to add to the hilt's beauty. Also noticeable to him was the insignia of his last name which was embedded within the center palm piece of the flashy chrome.

"This is mine?" D'rok questioned in doubt of actually receiving this gift.

"Yes, every Sangheili officer has one" R'tas pointed out.

"True. Although this level of 'trust' the Prophets have for me is hard to fathom."

"I second that thought, unbelievably, friend." R'tas admitted as he rolled his eyes.

"D'rok? Can I carry the armor for you as you get the Revenant?" D'rok turned to see M'riana standing along the side of the stage, smiling at him. D'rok nodded and gave her the armor to hold and he kept the Energy Sword case and returned to R'tas.

"Walk with me" R'tas suggested as he turned to leave the stage, D'rok did. "It seems to me that the Prophets trust you- wellâ€¦ obviously" He chuckled at his base observation. "I guess I cannot word it better than they must want you to move on and quit being a burden in their thoughts. It is not their problem now, science you are an officer you have the chance of choice of which ship and which division you enroll in." R'tas explained as he led D'rok towards the backstage area. "I would suggest being on my ship; though the division has no matter. I guess I can try and persuade further to the Prophets to lessen their hold on my ship; it should not be difficult since they have touched that matter already. In that case I would have direct and individual observations over my warriors; you would be rendered normal and unbothered. It would benefit you gre-" R'tas was cut off violently as the two entered the dim backstage area as he was taken by force and taken to the floor by a dark silhouette.

D'rok almost didn't believe he had just witnessed that even after it \_had\_ happened; it was the near prompt sound of struggle. D'rok looked onto where R'tas had landed, it was clear to see that R'tas was fighting whoever had tackled him to the floor. Out of the corner of his eyes D'rok noticed a pair of figures approaching the situation quickly from the other side of the room, as he looked over fully to the approaching pair immediately caught the sight of a suppressed blade.

D'rok opened the case quickly, grabbing the Sword hilt, and hastily tossed the case to the side. With his primary thumb D'rok flipped the triggering switch and the two sided hilt cracked at both end with a sudden electrical charge. Slowly, in the period of a few seconds, a bright white blade expanded outward from the initial finger width from the actual hilt on both ends. The white energy expanded both forward and backwards. The backwards expansion ended quickly in a wide blade whereas the frontward expansion of energy continued to stretch forward, bending closer to the other stretching blade of the two, from the hilt until tapering to a perfect infinitely sharp tip. The now completed blades which run parallel to one another faded from the bright white of a newly activated blade to a magnificent bright blue color; a hexagon pattern faintly lances across the translucent blades.

The pair stopped in their advancing tracks as the newly opened blade gave of a decent amount of illumination of the dim room. D'rok moved between them and R'tas and lowered in a defensive stance; lowering his torso and dropping the blade so the tips where just centimeters from the floor.

"Drop you weapons fools!" D'rok shouted at them aggressively; they seemed not to comply. "What you partake in is illogical!" The pair seemed to recognize D'rok and lowered their weapons to the floor. Their faces bare embarrassment as if they had made a mistake; which they had.

D'rok glanced back to see R'tas draw his Energy dagger and plunge it deep into the attacker's side. The assailant gave in to the pain and his attack ceased; R'tas seemed unfazed and unsympathetic and finished the aggressor's life with a well-placed blade swipe into his neck. D'rok turned back to retain a watch on the pair as R'tas moved the slumped body to the floor and stood visibly outraged.



"How dare you!" R'tas shouted at the still surprisingly living pair, D'rok recognized the one as the Ultra from earlier who was watching him so intently. "Do you know who I am!" R'tas screamed louder, demanding an answer from them; their only response to give him was a very shaky 'yes sir' from the other one, the younger of the two. The Ultra just stood there and when he decided to speak of a failed identity on a suspected heretic in the facility; they named not a name for the accused.

After that violent incident, R'tas could be found with D'rok walking at a brisk pace down a risen glass walkway above the training grounds of the Military Academy, D'rok followed quickly behind. R'tas was still angered about the foolish and mistaken murder attempt on himself earlier; the two had figured that they must have been truly after D'rok after D'rok had informed R'tas that the one had been watching him before the ceremony; the exact reason was not solidly chosen at the time however.

"I am having a difficult time reasoning with myself that an assassination attempt on your life would be held in such a public manner." R'tas admitted as he continued hastily down the glass walkway, D'rok hurried behind to pace.

"What of the prophets? Such a thing could be ordered by them, they would most likely send at least Ultras for that" D'rok pointed out to him.

"D'rok I know you are a minor conformist and human sympathizer, believe me, I am to an extent too; but that is not an action harsh enough for an assassination attempt."

"I am aware of this but what else is there? That is the only thing I can think of to reason with this. I do understand that I have many enemies but the Prophets seem to be the largest of all."

"I don't know what to assume and you shouldn't assume immediately, but I sigh in exasperation on your behalf; it is all just politics." R'tas sighed with the end of his speech as he finally slowed and stepped into a small circular observation room which hangs above young training warriors below. R'tas sat quietly for several moments, watching the young below in their exercises; D'rok stood nearby.

"It's simple sir; do not worry about this. What has happened has happened and I accept the incident. There is nothing we can do about it now." D'rok told R'tas trying to finally change the subject.

R'tas closed his eyes for a sighed moment "It was a difficult decision to pass by the Prophets. The Prophets would have rather tossed you aside and keep your old rank like they had already done. The only reason they considered the idea is that I had pointed out to them that you have been faithfully serving for almost as long as I have. I fear that if I was any less in rank as I am now they would have cast the suggested words even before they left my mouth." R'tas explained

"It's alright, R'tas, it does not matter. The Prophets will lead those who follow as they wish regardless of outside suggestions from their tainted wills." D'rok admitted.

"I recommend not speaking on the opinion, D'rok. They have been closely watching you; they most likely are listening to our speech as of now. R'tas paused then chuckled "however due to the late heightened Jiralhanae involvement I am starting to share your thoughts. The prophets are becoming more favorable of them it would seem."

"Yes, this is true" D'rok chuckled and loosened his stance.

"Very well" R'tas looked at D'rok, now serious. "To the important matter, Officer; you need to recruit warriors for your operation team."

"I guess I do"

"If you have immediate self-recommendations use this" R'tas offered D'rok a data pad, which he took.

The first choice of D'rok's, and most obvious of them all, was K'an Retmaree; this would surly happen if D'rok saw it through. The second was abet slower to think of to D'rok but easy enough; Sig Valakee. After that D'rok handed R'tas back his data pad.

"That isn't even enough for a fire team; the minimum is three request, you only selected two." R'tas pointed out.

"I only trust two" D'rok raised an eyebrow.

"Then let us see, I shall take you to the Varo Skirmish Field No. 2, a Skirmish is about to begin there." R'tas looked up at D'rok for approval.

"Very well, R'tas if you say so"

"I'll take you, I have not much to do now; you were the last promotion left." R'tas explained as he stood and began to lead D'rok away.

Later that day at about 11:45AM, D'rok sat in a chair on a spectator facility which floats high above the island which the skirmish would take place. The room that D'rok sat in had glass flooring and several screens for those watching to interact with cameras and scanned maps to track the progress of trainees and warriors as they complete and attempt goals below. Sitting in a padded chair staring into the large center holographic interface table intently, D'rok sat watching on screen which displayed a small water transport crossing the rough waters of the Kuran Sea.

The small craft traversed slowly towards the mountainous island which was located several kilometers from as planned; inside there waited four young Sangheili warriors. Two held no rank and the other two were categorized on screen as 'Special Operations'; one of the Special Operation Sangheili was female. The destination and goal of the skirmish was to storm the well-defended beach of the island, advance past several guards and retrieve a mock power core from a turret guarded facility. The end goal was to escape the island with the core before their time limit of eight hours expired by retreating to the beach for a pick up.

The setup was that all the weapons fired nonlethal rounds; instead the young warriors and defending staff would have a certain level of shield which would deplete until exhaustion then the inflicted area would lock up, stiffening the limb. It was similar if not the same as when D'rok had to storm his way onto an island to prove his allegiance to the covenant back in 2526; where he killed that Brute and earned himself is personal ownership of a Type-25 Spiker Carbine.

"It is about to start, D'rok, but I see you are already keenly attached to your screen." R'tas chuckled, informing D'rok as he took a seat nearby with his own screen.

And indeed it did as the small transport rolled up into very shallow water and sat waiting for the skirmish to start. At the immediate clock turn at 12:00PM the launch doors flew open and the trainees had but a few seconds before enemy fire began to rain down upon the hostile beach.

"Move to the Trees! Go!" The Special Operations Male shouted to the other three

D'rok watched as the four nearly dove from the transport and as they dashed across the sand which lay under pelting fire to the forestry a few dozen meters away on the edge of the beach. The group successfully had reached the tree line unscathed with the exception of the Special Operations female, who was hit in the leg with the ever so accurate Type-50 Beam Rifle; her shields barley held. As they entered the trees D'rok switched the screen to view the camera which was built into the female's helmet.

The four stopped after their little dash crossing the pelted sand and into the trees after almost a half a minute later. The SpecOps Male stood at a halt near a downed tree, the two recruits stood closely to each other panting softly; clearly the two were not the most fit youth.

"They've got the ridge line defended. How are we going to get to the facility passed them, sir?" One of the recruits asked in a shaky breath.

The Male SpecOps did not reply at first, instead he took out a data pad from his hip compartment and looked over it quickly; occasionally he pressing the screen to move on screen items. "We are going to go to the backside of the island. There is a bridge up to the back side of the mountain; from there we can take the less steep part of the ridge and make it to the objective." He paused briefly sigh almost regretfully "Sure, it will take longer, but it's the best chance we have."

D'rok leaned forward as he became intrigued by the SpecOps onscreen. With his left primary index finger D'rok pressed the SpecOp's rank, by this he opened up a small biography of Ryau Cinotee, the Male SpecOps who was taking lead of the trainees. D'rok liked what he was seeing far; Ryau seemed to be a natural leader, an innovative one as well, not many recruits or Minors would think to bring a data pad on such an Op. Also, he had realized, as simple as it was, Ryau had made a brilliant tactical decision; he was going to use the same strategy as the British had conceived at fort Mackinac in the first day of the war of 1812. The British had only fired a single cannon down into the

fort from an elevated position located behind the fort; it was the only shot needed to take the fort from the American shoulders who were stationed there.

"Oh, I see. Good plan sir" The recruit replied as he gave the other a glance.

"Now get moving!" Ryau ordered now clearly leading the four.

They moved quietly, successfully enough that they had not been noticed. D'rok watched through the several different camera placements at the trainers; he was tracking their movement closely. The trainers had heightened their defenses and doubled patrols around the facility, all in measures to protect their tightly knitted lines. D'rok noticed that a group of five trainers entered the woods swiftly in hot pursuit of the team-of-four.

D'rok switched back to the Female's helmet camera to see the group still moving carefully along a faint trail which scar the over grown forestry. All seemed fine until, as Murphy's Law dictates; anything that can go wrong will go wrong. The female tripped and fell forward; her hoof had caught an upturned root. As she fell forward her weapon discharged; from the little glimpse that D'rok could see on screen, her shots had hit a camouflaged trainer in the visor. She landed in a dirty puddle, plunging the camera screen into a dark murk of a capture.

After that happening the video remained dark due to the water, the sounds of a muffled firefight could be heard. D'rok switched from the female's camera to one of the recruit's helmet cams. The two recruits were pressed besides each other behind a large tree trunk which had fallen; streaks of plasma lanced over the dark aged and eaten bark of the trunk. The recruit which had the camera raised his plasma rifle and fired blindly into the underbrush where he presumed the trainers stood, he was somewhat successful. The Recruit took a quick glance over the trunk; D'rok caught a small glimpse of Ryau, who had taken cover against a tree; to see the action better, D'rok switched to Ryau's head cam.

Soon Ryau came from his cover, the trainers where all frozen on the ground. The mixture of mostly Ryau and the two recruits had managed to oust the trainers unscathed. With a sigh Ryau helped the female from the puddle which she still remained.

"Nice shot, Naki" Ryau chuckled at the female as he pulled her from the puddle.

"Why thank you, I always shoot best when I'm falling" the female replied sarcastically; at the recognition of her as Naki, the doctor he had aided weeks before, and her clumsiness caused his eyes to roll.

\_Later~ 7:57PM\_

D'rok continued to watch the four as they trekked through the trailed slopes of the island. They had gotten around the backside of the island and were now traversing up the rear slopes in a hasty manner. The four would need to hurry if they were to complete their task; they were quickly running out of time as the suns began to sink towards the horizon. The group had just topped the last slope of the

plateau that the target structure was positioned. Ryau stopped the group in sight of an auto-turret system which lay nearly hidden in the brush surrounding the facility.

"Naki, your armor is green. You may be able to sneak past the turrets and shut them down" Ryau told Naki.

"Got it" She answered almost dumbly and carefully she moved away from the group. Not to long after she radioed back to the three and told them that the turrets were off. Together the three rushed into the structure as she held the door for them.

"You two" Ryau pointed at the Recruits just after muttering something inaudible "Keep the door covered while Naki and I move in"

"Yes sir" The answered.

Ryau lead Naki creeping into the dark core room; they held their weapons tightly as the moved slowly, hunched forward cautiously. The two searched the room to ensure that they were alone; once sure Ryau approached the power core. He griped the cylindrical object by its end handle and the middle of its curved body. With a bit of force Ryau wrenched the core from its stand. The lights dimmed and the structures alarms began to sound as the power level failed.

"Shit, let's get out of here. They must know where we are now" Ryau told Naki, leading her back to the Recruits as he carried the heavy core. "What does it look like out there?" He asked them.

"There are six or seven trainers guarding the door, they have us pinned down!" One of the Recruits answered.

"Naki, how much time do we have left to finish the mission?" Ryau asked her with a sigh of annoyance.

"About twenty cycles" She told him.

With a quick thought, Ryau then went to a nearby console which held the controls to the outside turret systems. He pressed a button and the screen brightened for use; the light given off by the screen reflected off of Ryau's waxed armor curves. Outside the turret system turned back on, this time with a different initiative: Fire upon the trainer group; which is what they did. The sound of blazing barrels was short lived as the trainers fell, their armor stiffened. Ryau shut the turret systems off and turned to the recruits "Head out and make sure it's clear" Ryau ordered as he pointed out the door.

"Yes sir" The recruit ran out to the tree line a few meters from the door. Once he disappeared into the trees he shouted back for them.

One by one, Ryau sent Naki and the Recruit out to the tree line; he went after. As Ryau began the short distance to the forestry a second batch of trainers arrived and began to fire upon Ryau. In a spurt of dashing, Ryau dove into the underbrush. He landed on the other side of a downed tree; he unfortunately landed off balance and fell. He looked up to see Naki holding the core, she had caught it.

"Thank you, Naki" He said as he stood.

"No problem. Now let's get out of here" She replied as she handed him back the core.

Together they ran from the core housing stricter uphill further, to the top of the mountain where a Spirit transport waited hovering for them. The recruits were on the transport already as Naki and Ryau broke through the tree line. Naki quickly pulled herself into the transport then turned back to help Ryau heft the heavy metal cylinder into the Spirit.

Ryau turned back to the forestry, shouldering his Plasma Repeater, to see several trainers run through the trees after him. Ryau sat back on the lip of the bay ramp and fired down upon the trainers. Few fell but most gave up fire and lowered their weapons in defeat. The screen D'rok watched faded to black as the Spirit sailed away from the island; D'rok sat back in his chair with his fingers interlocked in thought.

"Are you interested in any of them?" R'tas asked him.

"Yesâ€¦ send a formal invite to Ryau Cinotee; I'm looking for someone with his expertiseâ€¦"

## 6. Act01 Ch05 Ryau Cinotee

SGTLEGENDKILLED~

Fate Continuum

Chapter 5: Ryau Cinotee

\_July 29 2552\_\_ 8:45AM\_

\_Tallaham Residence, Varo, Sanghelios\_

D'rok stood silently in front of the full body holo-reflexor in his living room. His eyes traced the handsome curves of his full uniform which he wore now. His helmet was held firmly in his arm at his side. His new set of black armor fit nicely over his dark grey, almost black, body suit; reflexive curves shined over the black glossy curves, subtly noticed, yet only matched by the dark red trim around the collar of the chest piece. The dark red trim was in several places and served no other purpose but for identification to differentiate him from a Major to an Officer. His eyes glanced down at his helmet; it held glossy curves too, although the trim stood out more that it had so on the chest plate. The trim runs around the ends of the eyepieces then back in a line to the end of the helm's end; over the right eyepiece, in mock of his injury and for customary purposes, D'rok had a fake scar painted over the eye piece.

D'rok closed his eyes and let a deep exhale seep from his unclenched mandibles. When once opened again, his eyes drew to the shoulders of his chest plating where his newly designed team emblem for his Operative team was permanently painted in oil based acrylic. The emblem was painted on both of his shoulder guards and on his back. The design was Sangheilian skull painted perfectly in the drawn, shined curve of a grey shield. Above the skull lay three name crests, listed from top to bottom in seniority starting at top: Tallaham, Retmaree, and Valakee; who are the three leading members in the

group. Even though that K'an and Sig were not officer's they held power and seniority over any new members in favor of selection of D'rok. Under the skull, just below the mandibles, was the Team's acronym, all in Sangheilian equivalent of 'FBP', standing for Far Beyond Provocation.

A pair of soft thin hands gripped the lower uncovered half of his upper arm from behind him. The hands were pleasantly warm against his dark body suit; this causes his eyes to close for a moment before he looked down at his companion's watching eyes.

"You look amazing, D'rok" M'riana smiled as she cooed to him, moving closer to him into an embracing hug on his elbow.

"Thank you, Love" he smiled back, now admiring her pretty eyes as they met.

"Anything for you, my sweet" She spoke softly as she purred. She reached up, taking his cheek in her fingertips, and met him halfway the height difference with a kiss. "But we must depart now." She told him as she hugged him.

"Unfortunately yes; we must head to the Spaceport, your shuttle leaves before mine."

"We are on the same ship?"

"Yes but weapons masters and apprentices must report before everyone else arrives."

"Well I knew that." She tightened her embracing hug on him "Then we should get going"

"We are already packed to leave. All of our belongings are in the Revenant"

He smiled, letting go of her to put his helmet on his head, and taking her hand he begins to politely lead her to the vehicle. Once she was in her seat he slid into the driver's seat. He backed the Revenant from its weather covering bay and onto the road. Switching it to gear the Revenant's turbines spun madly and the levitating craft began to rocket quickly to the Varo Spaceport.

D'rok slowed the Revenant to a gliding halt alongside the curb at the shuttle terminal. He met M'riana at her side with her things quickly. She took them from him and set them down to hug him.

"I will see you sometime later, D'rok" she told him.

"Ok, be careful" he looked down at her.

"Don't worry for me" she giggled "I have a present for you, that I build for you, I'll have it sent to your room when I can. Goodbye" She kisses him again and then left up for the shuttles ramp.

After she left, D'rok drove his vehicle to the vehicle holding center; it took longer than expected as some of the roadways were blocked off in preparations for a pre-campaign motivational parade. Once the Revenant was parked, D'rok turned his keys and registration into the lot guard and began to walk passed the parading and

celebration.

It was a happy time in Varo this morning; though there was always a pre-campaign celebration, it was always calming for D'rok to watch. He kept watch as he walked past the countless lines of Sangheilian infantry and the following lines of support vehicles and artillery batteries. Overhead the occasional Banshee or Phantom would pass at low levels.

Soon after he passed it all the streets would be seen as desolate except for a stray group of families of young warriors headed for their random destinations. Soon D'rok had almost reached the transport's entrance; he was close enough to now tell it was empty, only the Sangheilian check guard sit there, bored in his booth. D'rok stepped up to the check guard, gave him his ports of passage, and began to wait.

He stood there for several moments; in the time which seems to elongate by the lack of activity, D'rok glanced over at the benches for those in wait, where a lone Special Operations Major presently sat; he read the screen of a Data Assistant. The Major looked lost, sighing at his unknown read; the hint of worry was present in the young Sangheili's eyes, as if he was late for something. D'rok smiled slightly, thinking it would mostly it would be his first deployment based on his age; it was possible to reach Major rank before deployment, depending on skill and academic achievement in the academy.

D'rok started to walk over to the Sangheili, as he got closer he stopped to notice a Sangheilian couple running towards him in pursuit of a young female child. To his surprise, the little girl ran to him and hid behind his leg, she was clearly frightened. D'rok turned to face the rushing couple.

"Carless woman, I told you to hold her!" The male, a Major, barked loudly at the female as they stopped just in front of D'rok. D'rok looked down quickly at the fearing child then back to the couple.

"What happens to be the problem, sir?" D'rok asked concerned.

"Not that it is your quarrel, but my mate is too imprudent to control the child!" The male said harshly.

"Nihn, please..." The female begs, turning her head to the ground, uncertain what to do.

"S'hean i said silence!" The male shouted, turning to her suddenly raising his fist.

Before the male could make a fool-hearty action, D'rok quickly took hold of the male's wrist where it had been raised. D'rok stood firm, holding back the male's arm; silence took hold of the tense air for several moments. Every present person watched intently at the rapid cascade of events; the benched Major had even risen to defensive hooves.

The male turns his head back, looking at D'rok, now enraged further. "You dare stop my actions towards me wife!?" The nearly deranged male screamed.



"I will not allow you to beat this woman shamefully in public; so yes, i do interfere." D'rok sent the male a cold stare.

"Let go!" the male screams; the Major stepped closer from his bench, his hand was near his hipped weapon.

"There are two options for you: You can stop this childish nonsense or, and judging by your current actions you wish too, we can contest." D'rok warned the male, the male gives some tugs of his arms, leading D'rok to become more hostile. "Do not look at me in that manner unless you wish to fight, and you'll lose, I guarantee it!" D'rok raised his voice.

The aiding Major quickly took the female and her child from the fight to ensure their safety, just as he did the male tore his hand from D'rok's grip. The male took a step back and reached for his hipped Plasma Rifle. D'rok was at the ready, sword drawn, by the time the male had pulled the weapon from its clip; the male stopped at D'rok's ready, in-sighting yet another moment of tense pause.

"A drawn weapon demands blood! It is unlawful and illegal to take out a weapon in public" The male yelled in verbal protest against D'rok quick draw.

"You drew first!" D'rok shouted back

"You restricted my wrist"

"You were about to commit an unlawful assault upon a woman!"

"What does it matter!?" the male shouted back.

"It matters in the courts of Zelso; clearly you are not from here, sir; now stand down!" D'rok stated finally with a growl.

A 'halt' was given by the hurried feet of the Varo Spaceport enforcement, the male was apprehended for the conflict and only a few minutes later D'rok and the Major where released. As they went to leave, D'rok stopped to speak to the female; the young girl was hugging her mother, crying.

"Little miss?" D'rok spoke kneeling closely to the girl. The little girl looked at him sniffing.

"Come here, I have something for you; a gift" he told the girl sweetly, coaxing her from her mother's arms.

D'rok reached into a small bag strapped to his belt; out from it he took a small trinket of a necklace. He hung the necklace by its chain to show the girl of the metal piece which had been crafted into shape. Bent gracefully with curves and angles of blue; the Forerunner symbol of "Hope" hang attached to the chain.

"This was given to me some time ago, I want you to have it; I have a feeling it fits you" He told her. Happily the girl reached for the chain and D'rok helped her put it over her head and around her neck. The chain was a bit long for the child's size, but it looked good on her. The girl smiled brightly then hugged D'rok's chest plate, happily she purred with her cheek against his armor. "Little one"

D'rok told her after a moment of the little embrace. "Please take care"

D'rok stood and watched the little girl run off to her mother, he smiled; the little girl reminded him of his sister from long ago, back in his 'past-life'. He assumed she would be safe now, at least for a while; public violence was shunned when around the sight of civilians.

Finally he turned to the checkpoint, delayed now, and began his approach. At the checkpoint, the young Major was now trying to get through, he seemed to have a difficult time entering. With a roll of his eyes, D'rok approached the two and informed the guard that the Major was with him. Whether the Major was or not, D'rok never hesitated to help someone through checkpoints; it was, after all, how he met his loved one.

"Thank you officer" The Major told D'rok, walking backwards up the ramp to physically thank D'rok.

"Ryau Cinotee... That is your name correct?" D'rok asked, now seeing the Major's face

"Yes Officer, how did you know?" Ryau inquired

"I am the one recruiting you" D'rok smiled at Ryau, stopping to let Ryau enter the Phantom first. Once on the two stood next to each other. The Phantom did not wait long until it hastily took off for its destined ship. For a few moments at least it was quiet until a familiar female approached them; Naki Cimutee.

"There you are Ryau, I see you've met D'rok" She said

"Yes, I was afraid I wouldn't make it" Ryau admitted to her

"How are you doing D'rok?" She asked him, turning her head to him

"I'm fine...what are you doing here?" D'rok asked her

"I'm assigned with Ryau"

"For what?" D'rok question; she could mean trouble, there was little to no use for a scientist; something was up

"He's testing out our new armor systems"

"But don't you work in biology?"

"No, I study Forerunner Sciences" she corrected him, he rolls his eyes.

"Gods, are you going to just follow him around and carry things for him too?"

"I can fight"

"Yeah" He laughed "but why are you not with the jumpers? You clearly 'shoot better while falling' Naki"

"Oh you saw that..." She lowered her eyes for a moment as she gave an embarrassed blush.

"Nope, i just heard from a little 'bird'"

"That was an accident I'm usually much better" she assured him.

"Whatever you say, scientist" D'rok sighed and looked out the window silently for the rest of the ride.

Once the Phantom landed in the ship's hangar, D'rok got out and took Ryau for a nice little walk towards a private café. Ryau followed closely as D'rok led him into the café's hallway into one of the many open lounge rooms. D'rok let Ryau enter first. Entering the lounge D'rok shut and locked the door. He gave Ryau a sharp look.

"Sit down!" D'rok spoke loudly. Ryau sat quickly, clearly nervous; D'rok tossed his data pad onto the table which Ryau had sat at. The clap of the data pad startled Ryau to jump slightly.

"What is it, Excellency?" Ryau asked in a shaky voice.

"First off, don't call me glorifying names! I will not hear it!" D'rok demanded with a snarl.

"Very well— what shall I call you?"

"You will address me by my name; D'rok Tallaham"

"The whole thing?"

"If it makes you feel better" D'rok chuckled.

"Very well" Ryau grumbled quietly

"Now..." D'rok sits and stares at Ryau for many moments; this was part of the intimidation routine "what makes me want you to follow under my order?" He asked as he cracked a smirk.

"Well..." Ryau started, sitting forward in his chair in attempts to overcome his uneasy feeling. "I presume you watched a recording of my pre promotion skirmish"

"No, that does not answer my question. Now tell me: what makes me want you to follow my orders?"

"You tell me, you wanted me"

"A good answer, but don't be stupid. I know you are smart enough to answer the question."

"Well I'm smart and I'm good in combat"

"And?"

"I'm someone you think you can trust"

"Correction, youth: You assume I trust you; I do not! Your first

answer was correct, however" D'rok chuckled, soon to smile again.  
"What was the \_best\_ mistake you have made in your career?"

Ryau looked down for a moment to contemplate on the question "I got nothing" He answered in a confused manner. "is that all?" Ryau asked after receiving D'rok's stare.

"What do you expect of me" D'rok asked.

"For you to be a good leader"

"Is that by appearance or are you just trying to avoid my questioning?"

"I-" Ryau stuttered.

"By my appearance!" D'rok shouted over the table. "Read the cover of the book!" D'rok continued to stare harshly at Ryau; he wouldn't let the new recruit get off easily.

Ryau looked over D'rok almost desperately, his eyes darting around madly; all until they landed upon his scared eye. "I expect you to be an experienced officer with an amazing sense of situational leadership." Ryau answered quickly, hoping this to be over.

"â€| Correct answer" D'rok smiled genuinely now "Welcome to Far Beyond Provocation, kid. We are bunked in the Special Operations room G18. I will see you there in 20 minutes" D'rok turned out the door and began to leave; he stopped quickly and looked back at Ryau, serious again.

"I recommend you start now; it's a long walk"

## 7. Act02 Ch01 Calm of The Storm

**\*\*SGTLEGENDKILLED\*\***

**\*\*Fate Continuum\*\***

"The Calm of the Storm"

â€|Silenceâ€|

â€|Complete silenceâ€|

That was all that could be heard throughout the command center that held dozens of anticipating Sangheili crewmembers; they were silent for the one they were transfixed upon; a tall and prideful Sangheili in dark armor, a commander. The Sangheili that the crew watched so intently paid no attention to his audience; instead he stared emotionlessly down onto a series of Holographic screens which hover before him. Shown through the screens where several ship commanders, they watched the Sangheili through their screen unspoken as well, watching him with the utmost respect.

The respected Sangheili closed his eyes; this seemed to add to his viewer's anticipation. He could feel all of their eyes staring upon him, as if they were waiting for a response to a serious situation. He held no worries of who, what, or how they were watching; their

angled views mean nothing to him; he need not worry about how he sounds or how he appears. He was defiantly dressed accordingly; his armor shined frequently and his dark purple cloak hang draped graciously from his shoulders; in compliments to the trim upon his clean armor rest the golden crest of none other than Vadamee mid-back.

He was Thel Vadamee; Supreme Commander of the Fleet of Particular Justice and the Direct action of the Hierarchs. The Crew and the Commander, and all those other who viewed him; they were all his soldiers. They were waiting for his decision, his order, on what to do next. They would fight and die for him; and then they would grudgingly halt and cease and leave what they were tasked to do. They were hisâ€|

Commander Vadamee stood firm, continuing to make the masses wait; he looked straight faced onto the several displays before him. On the Graphical hologram wall of the Truth and Reconciliation's bridge project several screens, a large center one a single screen on either side of it, on the farthest sides where smaller screens; these held the waiting faces of each of the active Battle Group Zealots of the fleet. On the second largest screens: both screens were connected to form a split panorama of the large Covenant fleet on both sides of the large center screen.

And on the center screen, the one that held the fleet commander's most attention, held the prize; a planet. This planet was not just any planet; this one was specialâ€| The shined curves of blue and dark green, only a few disgusting scars of grey from human industry lay on the surface. In the near spectrum the debris of a split Covenant ship floated slowly in orbit of the large, terrestrial planet. As said before, this was no ordinary planet. Vadamee turned from the screens.

"My brothersâ€|" He started, his voice boomed, powerful "My blood; my kin! Today is a glorious day for the Covenant; all races alike! For we will tramp our boots onto this planet; this stronghold of the parasites, and rid their infestation on this hallowed ground! Brothers! Commandersâ€| Take charge and storm the ruins, for honor; for lost blood! We WILL annihilate the humans; for the gods!" Vadamee yelled; more not be needed to say however, this was enough for all of the watching to engage in an uproar of honored battle cries from all rooms, from all ships; every last soul yelled in righteousness.

Vadamee turned back to the screen, once more focusing on the planet.

"And it begins" He smiled

"This planetâ€| Reachâ€| will be restored!"

**\*\*FATE CONTINUUM\*\***

**\*\*ACT II: REACH\*\***

**\*\*SGTLEGENDKILLED~\*\***

><strong>Fate Continuum<strong>

><span><strong>Act II Chapter I<br>\*\*\*"The Calm Slips"

"Everyone up" D'rok shouted as he entered the Special Operation's barracks; closely behind, K'an followed to give aid to D'rok if needed to wake the hard of sleep. Groans came from several of the still sleeping Sangheili that all lay still at rest; their eyes closed tightly as K'an flipped the lights on to help further the ones that refused to give a groan.

"Do not groan; youthsâ€¦" K'an spoke "you have exactly five cycles to rise or you shall be punished by means of Ranger work" Ranger work being space patrol duty, which happened to be one of the least desirable duties. To the surprise of no one, there was not a single soul in the bunks after two cycles.

D'rok went over firstly to Sig's bunk near the far corner. D'rok nearly dragged him from his sheets to his standings. Sig stood wearily and blinked several times, dazed by the pull and sudden lighting.

"I amâ€¦woken sirâ€¦ sir?" Sig asked ponderously; his eyes met D'rok's with a few strained blinks.

"Sig" D'rok told him softly "get clothed quickly and gather your equipment, meet me and K'an in the far side of the hangar. The armory is going to fill quickly and you don't wish to get a horrid seat, m'kay?" Sig nodded "good boy" D'rok chuckles and slapped the youth's cheek softly.

D'rok left the barracks, leaving K'an to wake the rest. From there he quickly made his way to the Special Operation private rooms; the rooms were meant specifically for officers and other high ranks, or in the rare instance that a Sangheili had a married partner; much like D'rok had, he and M'riana were not married but they had been engaged before a priest and were allowed to share a bed together.

He walked passed his room and further down the hall was Ryau room, where he was headed. Stopping in front of Cinotee's door, he rapped loudly on the metal door with his knuckle. A groan could be heard from inside soon the door slid upward into the ceiling revealing a half-naked Ryau.

"What is it, sir?" He asked in a low, groggy voice.

"It is time to don your armor and retrieve your arms from the arsenal, do this hastily please." D'rok told him.

"Very wellâ€¦" Ryau said with a heavy sigh. He crept back into the dimness of his room and began to stumble around as he put his armor on. His female companion, the ever so strangely placed Naki Cimutee, had woken; she lay elevating herself on her propped arm, looking around with squinted eyes "Time to get up, Naki"

"By the gods leave her be! You can collect her things for her; be a gentleman for once, Ryau." D'rok ordered with the roll of his eyes.

"I was just waking herâ€¦" Ryau muttered as he passed D'rok for the armory.

"She was already awake, now hurry!" D'rok called down the hall loudly after Ryau. "Apologies miss" D'rok told Naki as he shut the

door.

Once the door was closed D'rok himself began his way to the arsenal. It was a bit of a walk, it was a good 10 cycle walk, yes, but uneventful; the halls were bare except for the occasional officer hurry passed to wake his soldiers. Passing the hangar D'rok could see that the Phantoms and Spirits were quickly being prepped for the invasion; Deck hands loaded the miscellaneous tonnage of crates/ weapon chargers/ and torpedo batteries into the transports. Just before the armory, D'rok stepped quickly to the side as a pack of grunts rushed passed towards the hangar bays as fast as their little legs could scramble to get there.

D'rok, taking his time, slowly entered the armory. He stopped a few paces in to look around. The armory was nearly empty; the arsenal counter was closed except for a single open window, the other windows were closed with sliding bars with metal mesh between the horizontal bars. On the far end of the armory, near the gate to the ten firing lanes, a Sangheilian Ultra was cleaning and calibrating a Plasma Repeater. Other than that, there was no activity; seeing this, D'rok approached the open window.

In the window there was nobody, just a straight back view to several arms of all classes hung on the wall and a case with many rowed arms held into place by clips. Hmm; D'rok pressed the service button to page the master or one of his assistants to help D'rok. Soon the door behind the counter opened, and none other than M'riana came out.

"Hello my love" M'riana smiled as she leaned out of the window and hugged D'rok.

"Hello!" He smiled and kissed her quickly. "What are you doing here? I thought you apprenticed at the other end of the ship"

"I am working here today; this is the closest armory to the main hangar bay and the barracks" she paused as D'rok gave a smile "What can I help you with, dear?" She stepped back, turned the lights behind the counter and put her hands on her hips, tilting her head at him.

"I'm here for my weapons; this is an armory, correct?" He replied smartly to her, chuckling.

"Yes it is, dummy" She giggled "I have something special for you" she smiled and backed away towards the door behind the counter from where she came.

D'rok smiled brightly, watching her leave; once she was gone he stood there waiting. Feeling kind of dumb, D'rok looked over to the Ultra who was staring at D'rok as if he was crazy, questioning him visually.

"She is my soon to be" D'rok explained.

"Ah, I see." The Ultra looked back at his weapon. "Blast this device" The Ultra exclaimed, showing hints of distaste for his weapon.

"What's wrong?" D'rok asked as he approached the table.

"Wellâ€¦" he started "it has aged, and it has seen many hours of combat. It over heats very fast and it is very inaccurate. I have replaced the ventilation system and the batteries seven times over just the time of two years." He sighed desperately.

"Hmmâ€¦" D'rok rested his mandible tips on a closed hand, pondering. "I know what to do. May I borrow your energy dagger, sir?"

"Ummâ€¦ yes officer, you may" The Ultra handed it to him.

D'rok took the Handled Energy dagger, activated it in his left hand, and carefully he took the Plasma Repeater in there other. Using his left secondary index finger, he pressed the vent cover testing button; this caused the vent cover to extend out on both sides. Once extended, D'rok used the energy dagger to clip an inch or so from the small end of each of the vent covers.

"By the godsâ€¦" the Ultra said, unsure of what D'rok was doing.

"Now what this does" He stated as he closed the vents and turned towards the firing lanes. "This will allow a constant heat expulsion, rather than the normal when it gets too hot. The expulsion of the energy on both sides with, as I like to say, levitates the gun on the sides, which holds it in place. Not only does this save your fire rate..." D'rok stopped to press a button near the fire lane, a target slid down from the ceiling far at the end. D'rok shouldered the weapon and fired several quick bursts of projectiles; a bright flash would emit from where the opening in the vent cover, creating a great flash on either side. Each burst, getting larger with each fired, where sent down the range and impacting the target of the poorly carved human shape; each shot hit the chest, where it was intended to. "It also greatly improves your accuracy"

"Wellâ€¦ I am impressed, brotherâ€¦" He admitted as D'rok handed him back the now warm firearm. "What would be your name?" he asked.

"My name is D'rok Tallaham; no suffixâ€¦"

"Oh..." the Ultra said, now unsure about D'rok.

"Don't worry, Ultraâ€¦ this is my sixth tour; I've had my mark for many, many years. I am still faithful to the Covenant." D'rok explained as he raised his right wrist to show the brand.

"Ahâ€¦ I've heard stories of you, Mr. Tallaham"

"I'm famous among the Sangheili" D'rok chuckled; the Ultra did fittingly, not truly.

"What I don't understand, if you will forgive meâ€¦ is why they didn't just kill you when you were convicted."

"I have killed a demon, very early in the war, one of the firsts."

"The stories are true?!" The Ultra spoke delightedly.

"Yes, that is how I have this pretty little scar over my eye?"



"That would explain... I was noticing that kind of scarâ€¦ the depth would match a quick swipe of a human tactical knife." The Ultra stated.

"Wellâ€¦ yes"

"You said earlier in the warâ€¦ this is your sixth tour?"

"Yes."

"How old are you?"

"I just turned 52 a few months ago, you?"

"I'm a young 68" He smiled. "Eight tour."

"Very nice; what is your name sir?"

"I am Senior Ultra Grek'la Yauniktee" Grek'la told him proudly.

"Nice to meet you"

"Likewise, D'rok; it's nice to meet a mature Sangheili of rank, I'm about finished dealing with these majors. Gods, I think they are recruiting any city child who wants to hold a gun" He admitted with a chuckle.

"Yeah, I agree; I think they want not the aged soldiers. Maybe we get too opinionated."

"True. Trueâ€¦ well friend it was very pleasing to meet you; oh the infamous Tallaham" He smiled and the two shook hands, quickly he packed his rubbish from the table. "I must go now; a Shepard must tend to his flock, especially when they are unruly. Ughâ€¦ youth and their morning hatred of waking" Grek'la muttered as he left the armory.

D'rok smiled with a chuckle as his newly acquired friend left the armory. He then continued to wait for M'riana to bring him his 'gift'; he was eager to see what she had got or made for him. He noticed the door behind the counter open once again; M'riana came out carrying a weapon case. She exited the booth and came by and set the case down on the now clean table top. She unclipped the latches and looked up at him and smiled.

"And what do you have there, little miss?" D'rok asked her with the low rumble of his voice.

She did not answer him, simply her smile grew and she lifted the top of the case. She let go of the lid, stands on either side held the lid up in its vertical position, she reached into the case and with both hands she lifted a red colored weapon. It was not a model of weapon that D'rok recognized. The weapon was sleek, much like most of the Covenant firearms, although despite the colored metal guard which lay under and over the very visible dark metal body of the gun, it seemed more steel than the other's. The weapon had a two long barrels, most likely just short of 50 centimeters long from base to

tip; they lay on identical tracks horizontally and side by side. The automatic bolt head, which was a bulb shaped tip sticking out a few centimeters from the base of the barrels with a strip of blue florescent light, shook out at a resting position. On the top ridge of the weapon were iron sights and the magazine loader, which was bent off to the left with three circular holes.

"Say hello to the Type-51M Carbine. I custom added the dark red finish as you like, built it from a bare kit, my sweet." M'riana smiled delightedly, if she had a tail it would surely be wagging now.

"I love it, thank you very much, love" D'rok cooed to her.

M'riana squealed, set the gun down, and jumped into an embracing hug, kissing him graciously. "I love you"

D'rok purred "as do I" He kissed her sweetly.

"Wellâ€¦" she started as she lowered her strong self to the floor and she then picked up the type 51m again. "it is a brand new weapon that has finalized testing for the Covenant military, this leave of fleet was the last leave without the Type-51; I picked on up for a weighty price for personal useâ€¦. Come here; I'll show you!" She commanded him as she took a small crate of ammunition and took herself to the near firing lane where the target still hangs from the ceiling.

"It's a fully automatic version of the type-51A; it holds total of 50 rounds fully loaded, has a fire rate of 900 rounds a cycle and has alternating barrels to help accuracy greatly and to eliminate overheating completely. It is a very accurate weapon which fires 8.7x60mm case less radioactive rounds, these are the same thing as the fuel rod fires just teeny weeny" She smiled cutely and then shouldered the weapon.

She pulled the trigger and held it, letting the two barrels work as bluish green flashes belched out of the two tips. M'riana held the trigger, not hampered by the hard recoil on her shoulders, until all 50 rounds of the magazines were emptied. She turned back to D'rok; the barrels smoked as she held them down to the floor comfortably, and stood watching him for a few moments. Slowly she went to him and handed it to him.

"Don't lose this on me, babe. This is my gift to youâ€¦ use it well" She said with a smile.

D'rok was affected by not why she said what she said; but instead of what she said in wordsâ€¦ '\_This is my gift to you... use it wellâ€¦' her voice rang in repetitious manners, repeating again and again; slowly her voice began to lower in pitch then taint with an accentâ€¦ Soon the repeating phrase was being spoken by a man; D'rok had a brief, vicious flashback, of him looking down the lifeless eyes of his long passed friend, barred into his few memories from his human years. It was the dead eyes of Nikolai Garstrovâ€¦ those were his exact last words.

His face lost all color; the flashback, though only a speeding picture, he could see vividly with all of his senses. It felt as if he felt more at that moment in the flashback than he experienced when

it actually happened; he could smell and taste the horrid mix of fuel and gunpowder in the air, he could FEEL the sand as it blasted at the cracks and hole of his old human uniform, in the sleeves, the legs, and the collar. He could see very vividly his friend's face and the blood of his friend as it ran and soaked into the old tanned sands beneath his weight.

D'rok turned from M'riana and rested his top weight onto his arms on the table. He clenched his eyes shut hard to rid his mind of the thoughts and feelings. It hurt extremely to remember; it was one of the heavy things that he had forever carried. He was forever left to know that he wasn't fast enough that day, he knew it; he swore by it.

"Gods!" D'rok nearly shouted, he opened his eyes and against his will tears streaked from his eyes and off of his cheek.

On the right the tears rolled right out the small indent of the scar, the salty content irritated the flesh; forcing him to cringe his face in his gasps until he could stop crying. He wiped his eyes vigorously for several moments; it proved ineffective to his tears to stop them. He took his hands from his face and looked up towards the overhead light as his final tears. Several tears rolled from his cheek and into his gaping mouth and onto his tongue, leaving a bitter salt taste that he remembered greatly... He remembered the taste clear as day; it was the identical taste as his tears from the happening of it almost 30 years ago. It still hurt very much. It was a horrible thing to carry

"D'r-.."M'riana stopped and just watched, her hands lay clasped over her hidden necklace under her shirt; she was unsure of how to act on how D'rok just changed, it was most likely best to let him.

D'rok sniffled deeply, his sudden experience dealt a hard deal against him as if he faced a stacked deck. With a sharp, quick exhale, D'rok took the weapon from M'riana and placed it back in the case it belonged in. He stood over the case as if he was frozen; he watched numbly as tear after tear fell onto the black metal case. Each cascaded down to the metal and gave a sad splatter which failed to travel farther than a fingers distance away from its dry impact. Confused, M'riana snuck silently closer to him and hugged him lightly; careful not to move too fast to him to insure their safety. Slowly he wrapped his big arms around her and embraced her care.

"it's ok it's not your fault" D'rok whispered to her softly as he closed his eyes and rested his chin against her head.

The two stood as such for a several time; M'riana just held on around to D'rok, comforting him as best as she could, she realized too that he, regardless of his experience and time in the military, had things that in a moment like this turn him to seem mentally distraught. This had happened before; once in the two months that she and he had been together, the first time was the worst because she knew not how to react; it was new to her at the time, but she learned. D'rok finally pulled from her comforting embrace and looked down at her; she softly took his cheek in her hand.

"Are you alright, D'rok?" she asked him though caring eyes.

"Yesâ€¦ I'm sorry. It wasn't you and I'd rather not talk about this one." He explained as color left his face towards a normal color.

"Very wellâ€¦" She smiled. "Well my little mothâ€¦ you must fly. It is time." She giggled.

"You are correctâ€¦ thank you very much for the weapon. It means much to me." He told her and hugged her once again.

D'rok picked up his new weapon's case and started to leave; he left her a kiss on the way to the door.

"Please do come back in one piece, hun!"` She called to him with her hand collapsed over her necklace.

D'rok left the armory depressed, he is leaving one he loves once again; the feeling always seems to catch up with him every time he acts in any manner. So for now he would head back to his quarters and prepare himself for the invasions, there were still many hours until it would commence. The walk was just as eventless as the first; nothing held happening and excitement in the least on his way. Once in his room, he closed the door behind himself and set his belongings on the ground and approaches the bed. With a guttural expelling of air that could be considered a sigh, D'rok fell onto his bed; his body felt weary to him for some reason.

After a while, D'rok painfully sat up onto the edge of the bed; his hands absently gripped the silky sheets slowly. He closed his eyes briefly, inhaled then opened them once again. He started to look around the room, taking it in visually like he had not before. It was different than before; it was almost if he was in the wrong room. The grey hexagon pattern on the floor held little shine as it had before as he remembered it. It didn't shine but it still held the tint of the dim white blue light that was given off of the dim lights above that remained just above being off. D'rok stood up and stopped in the middle of the room. For several more moments he gazed around the room at the several objects placed around his quarters. Everything seemed to perfectly reflect the cherry purple color of the metal walls that lined the quarters; there was much to this room. D'rok walked towards the wall near the end of the thigh level bed; the cool breeze ran along his legs escaping from between the frame and the levitating mattress. D'rok reached out and lightly touched the metal wall; the cold metal felt as if it had traveled to his core.

"You alright?" A voice that came from behind D'rok made his hand snap away from the wall; the door had opened.

"Yesâ€¦" D'rok answered softly as he turned to see K'an leaning against the door frame, his armored arms lay crossed in front of him.

"It doesn't look like itâ€¦ this is how you used to get before you would leave Caseyâ€¦" K'an admitted.

D'rok looked down shaking his head. "Your right, friendâ€¦" he paused, looking at his scared wrist as he clenched his fist "it is a feeling that I have not felt in agesâ€¦ I am going to be leaving a love behind to fight..." He paused again "I hate this warâ€¦"

K'an stood from his lean and approached D'rok, closing the door behind him. "I do tooâ€¦ but it clear that the Covenant would wait for nothing as soon as we end our service to them they will dispose of us. You know it"

"Unfortunately" D'rok signed once again

"So we are in here until we endâ€¦ unless you finally wish to just pass"

"No, K'an, I am to marry after this assault now" D'rok looked at K'an as if to plead. "if it means that I have to continue to participate in this never ending slaughter to continue to be here with her then that is what I'm going to do."

"I knowâ€¦" K'an said simply, putting his hand on D'rok's shoulder. D'rok looked down at the bed, as if to have a brief moment of memorial.

"K'an?" D'rok asked, looking back at his friend

"Yes?"

"Why do you continue?"

"Well" K'an started as he straightened his neck a bit, pulling his head back. "I have always been 'tickled' by the thought of going under and taking souls by my sidesâ€¦ it seems it has not been my time to kick the paleâ€¦ I'm sure I'm overdue soon" K'an suddenly smiled. "And I mustn't let you go unsupervisedâ€¦ someone has to care for you; the Caretaker achievement" K'an's smile grew brightly. D'rok remembered his little dirty reference and laughed.

"Thank you, friend."

"D'rok, you will see this bedroom again. You lustful child, you" K'an laughed again "now come, it's time to leave."

"Very well, let me collect my sword" D'rok moved from K'an and reached under the bedframe to pull out his Fancy black box which held the sword within. He took it out and put it against the magnetic strip on his right hip.

"Is this a new gun?" K'an asked as he inspected the gun case near the bed."

"Yes, it is a gift from M'riana." D'rok explained.

"Oh niceâ€¦ how thoughtfulâ€¦ anyway I'm going to wait outside for you, I'll tell the guys to meet us in the far side of the hangar." K'an told D'rok as he left the room, waving as he left.

D'rok sighed once again, he smiled this time. He went to the Type-51M's case and put the weapon onto a small holding clip in his back over his shoulder and put the several ammo cylinders in his hip compartment. From the closet near the foot of his bed he took his full, head covering helmet. It was a nice design, it protected all of the face and the sides and jaws too; it had its flaws, yes, such as a somewhat limited field of vision where peripherals were cut somewhat; the HUD was a bit annoying as it would become cluttered at time with

objectives and such downloaded in a convention time of fight or flight. It was a model of helmet that was switched to be the replacing standard in the human calendar year of 2546. This would be D'rok's first tour with such a helmet. The armor was different; it was build more to fit in several variants of the same set, to fit all of the subspecies of Sangheili that have changed slightly over time; He was as most would consider a Jungles Tier Sangheili, known properly as a Sangheili Arboribus. This race was normally of a stocky build, generally shorter by a few centimeters, standing at an average of 2.3 meters tall versus the 2.6m of the Plain Tier, or Sangheili Vaganti, who make up a good portion of the population.

Once his things were collected he made his way to the hangar where he would meet the rest of the team. K'an came around just after D'rok had arrived; as they wait D'rok listened to Mike rant about several topics ranging from a list of Female Stupidity, The rising price of vehicle power, and Politics soon the other two finally showed up.

"D'rok" Ryau, who arrived closely second addressed D'rok with a nod

"Hello, majors" K'an greeted them as he stood from his lean on a large supply crate.

"Hello sir!" Sig, in his usual peppy state, stood proudly before the two senior members of the team and saluted K'an and then D'rok. Strangely Ryau either ignored or didn't hear K'an's greeting; K'an was angered by this.

K'an took a step in front of Ryau, placing his towering figure between Ryau and D'rok "I spoke to you, Major!"

"I'm sorry sir, I did not hear you." Ryau tried to explain.

"I think you had, but instead chose to ignore me" K'an accused with a growl

"I heard nothing from you sir, I have just arrived too" Ryau pleaded.

"My voice is never hard to hear!" K'an spoke loudly, now offended it seemed. "You were right next to Sig and he heard it!"

"What did you say? Ryau asked,almost timidly.

"I said hello"

"Hello sir,then." Ryau said quickly with a salute.

K'an gave him a dark stare "Watch your-self" he told Ryau as he took a step back towards his resting lean spot was.

"Ryau" D'rok spoke.

"Yes sir?"

"This is your first campaign?"

"No, it's not"

"Where else have you been placed?"

"I was involved in the battle over what the humans called arcadia and Bliss."

"Good, Have you ever dropped?"

"Orbital? Yes, but it has been a long while, I was on a recruitment tour for cycles before being assigned to Science major Cimutee's detail"

"Why are you assigned to her?"

"To provide support and protection, and I knew her from training"

"Hmm" D'rok paused. "As of now we are going to be with the second invasion force, it leaves right after the first. Our target is the populous human city named New Alexandria. I will be informed more of this at the pre-invasion officers briefing and I will fill you all in as I learn objectives myself" any questions?" D'rok waited for a response; hence none was given "I want you all on your phantoms in 45 cycles." At that, D'rok lead K'an away from the group just as Naki arrived.

Soon D'rok had to attend the officer's briefing, leaving K'an to collect his things fully. To pass the time he waited in contemplation until it was time for him to gather the team, which took no more than 10 cycles. Once ready, with his hilt on his hip and his gun on his back, D'rok traversed to the Officer's mission debriefing. The plans had recently been changed; K'an would be left to lead the Kill Team until D'rok would reunite with them after the landing of his separate phantom.

"Alright young and lively; hop aboard!" K'an ordered loudly at Sig and Ryau as they leisurely made their way to the Phantom's gravitational lifts. "and miss" He chuckled at Naki as she followed behind Ryau.

As soon as the others were lifted weightlessly into the bellow of the transporting craft, K'an slipped himself in a similar manner. On board there were several rows of soldiers of different species who stood against their brace which held them as a restrictor. K'an made his way to the left flank of the transport and braced his armor in the slot next to Ryau. Sig was on the far end against the wall on K'an's other side, Naki was across from Ryau.

"Umm" are we waiting for D'rok?" Ryau asked, the one voice that K'an didn't care for broke the almost silent interior.

"He is taking another phantom... I get the joy of leading you" K'an sighed.

There was a brief moment of softness in the air. "Very well," Ryau started loudly, K'an rolled his eyes immediately in annoyance; this was unseen by Ryau "If I may ask; what do they call the planet we are invading?"

"They call it Reach..." K'an answered

"R-reach?" Ryau asked with a strange stutter; it sounded if he held fear.

"Yes, but why the stutter?"

"No reason" Ryau was quick to answer.

"I doubt that for some reason"

"Do not doubt, please" K'an noticed Naki give Ryau a certain strange look.

"I will if I feel necessary"

"There is no reason to be worried, there is no problem, I have just heard a lot of this place they call Reach" Ryau explained finally.

"Very well... don't show your inner emotions; I warn you, youth." K'an advised him for his future. "The heightened figures don't like it."

"I won't"

"Good" K'an looked out towards the nearest window.

The assault fleet could be seen; like a thousand fireflies in the night sky, the crafts massed closely and began to dive towards the large terrestrial planet. The swarm of small crafts slammed into the atmosphere; shaking violently as anti-air flak erupted around the craft, occasionally making their mark and downing a craft nearby. Through the rising hail, D'rok, on a nearby following Phantom, spoke to the team on the coms.

"Listen, Provocation; you are heading towards the human city of Alexandria, what they call it. I will be landing right behind you and will further brei-" with a sudden shake, the com was ended.

The Phantom had shaken in a way that it had nearly almost been directly hit; K'an noticed some of the younger warriors became very nervous. K'an undid his harness and freed his armor from the armor. He stood for a moment then put his hand up onto a railing above his head to hold his firm footings. K'an moved around to check how they all were holding up. He stopped near a window to get a better look on the planet.

"Provocation!" K'an turned from the window, shifting slightly from the shaking of the Phantom. "We are close to the destination. When we touch ground where we are needed, I will be your lead until Tallaham arrives. Understood?"

"Understood" they replied.

Naki's answer was quietest of the lot, her eyes were locked out of the window nearby where a Phantom traveled of course out over a nearby mountain side far from the city edge; Smoke billowed from behind it as it slammed into the surface, leaving a plume of dirt that could be seen from her view. She quickly began to wonder of who was on the craft, and who was on all of the other crafts; but that



one she wondered mostâ€¦ she saw it burn from the group that her Phantom had flown in.

## 8. Act02 Ch02 Far Beyond Provocation

SGTLEGENDKILLED~

Fate Continuum

Act II Chapter II

"Far Beyond Provocation"

The huge fleet of Covenant aircraft had barreled at the huge expansive human city, no amount of anti-aircraft had been able to halt the shining wave of metal. The aircraft rushed through the openings between the skyscraper tops that had risen above a bearing blanket of fog which prevent a sight being caught by the surface level of the city; the crafts only broke their certain formation to dance with the occasional Human craft.

Looking out over the passing glass windows, K'an stood on in the small opening of the side of the phantom; he held his outward stance with an overhead hold on the frame of the door. His uncovered face was stern as he worried for D'rok's sake; D'rok had become irresponsive and it had been since the com between D'rok and he had been severed as the phantoms had entered the atmosphere. K'an forced himself to shove his fear down inside of his gut and, instead, he had begun to distract himself with the fact that he would have to command the squad ifâ€¦ no, until D'rok had returned.

Now the Far Beyond Provocation, which had been the last group on the Phantom, were being assigned to provide aid to a Multi-species team who were having trouble on the rooftop of a building the middle of the city. The kill team was still harnessed in but they were ready to go; at least K'an hoped so.

K'an turned to them, they pay nearly no attention to him, Sig was talking to Ryau and Naki stood listening. K'an was worried about Ryau, there were reasons why and he seemed to know what he was doing; it was just that there was something different about him, K'an knew it, but could not name the difference. He was not worried about Sig; he did however hold some insecurity to the idea of a female, Naki, being on the battlefield.

"Provocation" K'an started in his normal, deep barking voice "I have received orders from command for us to give aid to a downed transport upon a rooftop towards the center of the human city." K'an stepped closer to them, Sig was listening intently, always intrigued when he or D'rok ever spoke. "Unharness yourselves and prepare for combat"

K'an stood un-faltered as the Phantom tilted suddenly as it skewed its nose towards the destination of Provocation. Sig was the first from his harness, his weapon was already prepared to leave by the time Ryau had begun to unclip himself from his harness. Naki was just behind him.

The Phantom banked hard towards a rooftop, it was clearly visible

that a phantom had crashed there; a firefight had sparked to life between the survivors of the Phantom and several black armored humans. The Covenant survivors were not doing well, there were a small number of them and were little match for the highly trained Human soldiers.

"Provocation! Be ready, we are dealing with Orbital Troopers" K'an shouted as he readied his weapon, pulling the bolt back on his Needle Rifle. Sig gave a quick look to Ryau then he positioned himself.

The Phantom's nose rose sharply as it leveled itself out to be level with the roof top; from the lip of the Phantom it was nearly a 15ft drop to the rooftop. The humans had not begun to fire at the newly arrived Phantom due to its shocking quick decent and the dark smoke which billowed from the downed transport masking the Phantom. K'an hopped out from the lip down to the rooftop; sig followed just a second behind him. The two rolled to their feet after their fall and took cover behind a cement outcropping, hiding themselves from the human's view.

"Any time you wish to join us Ryau!" K'an shouted over the com. Dragged by the command, Ryau, followed by Naki, dropped from the Phantom.

"Female!" K'an yelled at Naki "Go to the survivors and give medical aid if they are willing, Ryau you will follow suite with me and Sig!"

K'an shoved off from cover and sprinted down the side of the roofline; Sig had little trouble holding keep with K'an. Within the duration of just a several seconds, the two had already gotten to the flank of the iron shielded keep that the humans had used to get the upper hand on the survivors of the crash. K'an jumped into a diving roll past a large walkway which went up to the iron flanked. Sig stopped just before the walkway and hid facing K'an on the cement corner of the walkway opening; both corners were occupied.

K'an gave a quick signal to Sig. In response Sig leaned out quite a bit around the corner and fired several volleys of shots at the less exposed Humans. The blue bolts struck two of the humans, sending one to the ground in screams as his armor melted around his shoulder. K'an quickly stoop and pitched a well-placed Grenade at the humans; the burning blue hail danced up the final section of walkway and skipped against the inside portion of the iron shielding. K'an charged swiftly up to the top of the walkway as the grenade burst violently with a loud electric wail. He stopped at the top with his Needle Rifle shouldered and quickly dispatched the rest of the Orbital Drop Troopers. K'an finally, after only using half of the magazine, reloaded; the human opposition was no more.

K'an glanced around quickly to determine that there were no more Humans, which there wasn't. Sig joined him at the top and the two looked down the run way to see Cinotee bringing up to the rear

"You must remember, youthâ€¦ timing and precision is everything; Hesitate you die" K'an advised him.

"Ohâ€¦" Ryau replied.

K'an focused on the crashed transport. The smoke that billowed from

it had thickened; multi-colored flames had started to flick around the openings. He could see Naki dragging a Kig Yar from the debris. K'an wasted no time to get down there to see what was going on. Once down there, followed by Sig and Ryau, K'an could see that all of the injured had been pulled from the burning wreckage.

"Who is unscathed, state 'aye'" K'an ordered.

K'an received three responses. One from a coughing Sangheili Minor who was lifting himself over a piece of the craft; another was from another Sangheili Minor who was helping Naki drag a deceased Jiralhanae; and the final one was from a Sangheili Major who stood just off from Naki not doing much of anything.

"State your names and ranks" K'an told the survivors.

"Rtik Renamee, Minor" The coughing one answered.

"Vera Takalee, Minor" The one who helped Naki replied as he dusted his arms off.

"I am Sremm Vakrelee, Sangheili Major of the covenant!" The Major who seemed to just be in the way told K'an proudly.

"Alright" K'an replied Greatâ€¦ a boaster he thought; mentally was reeled into a face palm. "Naki, you can handle this till another Phantom arrives?"

"Yes I can, Sir" She replied as she helped yet another wounded from debris.

K'an looked around for a moment. "Naki stay here, I am going to Provocation and the two minors to go to the next lower floor and check for human soldiers. We will secure the building top."

"You will NOT leave me here with thisâ€¦ this woman!" Sremm scowled loudly in disgust.

"Fine, very well. Just keep quiet and don't get in the way of my fire" K'an gave a quiet contorted growl at the major's immaturity as he led the group towards the part of the roof where the Orbital Troopers had been emplaced.

Just behind the iron shielding there was a narrow stairwell that led down to a decent sized maintenance room. The group navigated through the low hanging ceiling and the pipes and cluttered wire masses that hang like spaghetti around from the ceiling until they came to a large green door. K'an slowly opened it and checked the view of a hallway to the right; Sig checked the right under K'an's view, crouched against the lip of the door. K'an entered the hallway first and waited for Sig's word.

"Clear left." Sig said.

"Clear Right." K'an replied and the two parted further down the hallway several meters for everyone else following to come out. "We have two elevators at the end of the hall. This is just maintenance access." K'an stated.

As usual, he was right; the hallway was not a long one, at the left

end was just a few mops and brooms stacked next to a plant in a jar. The group moved to the right end where the two elevator doors were shut. K'an pressed both of the down buttons on each door and they waited for the doors to open. Once they had, Ryau and Sremmm headed into the left one and K'an, Sig, Rtik, the minor went into the other cylindrical room.

K'an pressed the button to the next floor, which was pretty far down; these were maintenance elevators, and the get off floor was almost halfway down in the middle of the skyscraper. As he pressed the button, both of the elevators began to descend. A few seconds later, the elevators left the darkness and the groups discovered that the walls were glass and the elevator was lowering down through a tube. The view was no less then breathtaking. Rtik gave a chuckle at the cheesy elevator music. In compensation for the appealing sky there were many visible aircrafts of several classes. Higher in the atmosphere a pair of CAS assault cruisers traveled seemingly in a lazy manner over the large city. They provided reinforcements as the smaller crafts took big chunks of the human air force. Traversing between the roof tops and the cruisers were a nearly overwhelming number of covenant transports of the Spirit and Phantom class craft. Finally the Seraphs fighters lanced over the city redundantly and the Banshees weaved around buildings, madly locked in dog fights with the human duo rotor crafts.

K'an closed his eyes, enjoying the near science inside the elevator. Sure, there was the human elevator music which played endlessly, but it was soft; and the quiet is seldom present during wartime. Even at resting hours the ships gears and workers slaved tirelessly during the 'night' hours. Rtik giggled once again for no apparent reason, causing K'an's mandibles to tighten fiercely in annoyance. Vera, the other minor except Rtik, was seemingly fascinated by the material that the window was made of, which was basic down to the old curve glass.

"Godsâ€¦ this is beautiful. I did not count on the humans to craft such plasma; it is cold to the touch!" Vera exclaimed.

"It is not plasma, child" K'an spoke harshly, scolding the young warrior "It is a transparent material called by the humans as glass." K'an growled and tried to continue to enjoy the quiet.

"Oh," Vera released softly, giving it a pause "I see"

The silence lasted hardly three seconds, Rtik childishly giggled. It was a loud and very unsettling chuckle of a five year old; it was extremely bothering to K'an as he hated children. With his eyes already sprung tightly open, K'an turned his torso to face Rtik.

"Is there a problem youth?" K'an asked, growling still. He had gotten a glimpse of Vera in the process of licking the glass. Vera's act quickly ended as soon as he noticed K'an turning however.

"No, sir, it simply amuses me to imagine our presence here if civilians were present." Rtik answered, trying to give K'an an excuse worth giving; it was not that good, rather crummy to be truthful.

"Child, if you wished to laugh or have fully functional mouth parts from this day onward I expect you silence yourself before I shove my

fist into your gaping maw and rip your vocal cord from your tracheal cavern."

K'an turned from the youth; his teeth were tightly together from his mental encounter. He had trouble enjoying the silence, but he found a little lick of serenity by picturing himself ripping a small and young version Rtik arms off, non-lethally of course, and watching the youth run in circles endlessly. The elevator shook slightly; it shook once more after a brief pause.

"My gods, what are you children doing?!" K'an demanded to know as he turned to them, they both were looking upwards through the transparent walls of the elevator.

K'an looked up to see a pair of duo rotor crafts in a vicious dog fight with a single Banshee class fighter. The fight was very close to the tower as the Banshee sped in vain, rapidly circling the building trying to evade the heavy anti-aircraft volleys from the paired human crafts. After a few rounds one of the human Duo rotors slowed to a hover and as the Banshee came back to his side the hovering craft fired a heavy volley at the Banshee. The Banshee was no match for the heavy fire, and even though it banked hard, the rounds tore the light purple craft's wing clean off. At the loss of the wing, the Banshee unavoidably slammed into the skyscraper. The Banshee had taken out a good portion of the tower on directly above the elevators; it was still several floors above the elevators. Both of the elevators shook hard.

"Gods!" Vera yelled as He, along with everyone else, was shoved by the change of momentum towards the outfacing curve of the window. Both of the elevators halted.

"Everyone freeze their movements; do NOT move, the brakes have most likely caught it" K'an spoke surely. His view quickly changed as he turned to see the tube section above them tilting outwards from the skyscraper, the glass of it cracking just too shattering point up the length of the tube.

Suddenly, both of the elevators gave way, their brakes failing from some mechanical error, and dropped from their slightly tilted positions into free fall. Falling at such speeds greater than the gravitational pull of the planet, the group found themselves fighting the free fall as they were soon being pulled with the elevator by the ceiling. K'an somehow had still help himself composed, the two young warriors, however, were anything but contained; their loud wails screamed into K'an's ears.

The elevators were falling in unison very quickly; they had already passed the deep mist that seemed to blanket the surface at half height of the skyscrapers. With a streaming bloom, the elevators exited the mist. K'an could barely see the surface that the two elevators were falling towards, it was a several hundred meters below. K'an shot a shaky glance over at the other elevator; Ryau and Sig were having a load of trouble too. Suddenly their elevator started to slow down, leaving K'an's elevator to continue to rocket to the surface.

The other elevator had caught the emergency failure brakes, where the one he and the two minors were haven't for some reason. Maybe they had failed or had not been installed to start with. The surface was

approaching fast, there was little time and even less methods of escape. K'an had sprung an idea quickly and he quickly pushes Rtik from the inward side of the elevator. K'an propped himself to the inward side by putting his boot against the outward glass; he fumbled with a small device on his belt. In his grip was a small tubular device that fit well into a fist; at one end there was a button covered by a trigger guard and the other end was a closed opening.

K'an flipped the button guard from the button, as the guard popped up the small tip of an energy based pick formed on the closed end. K'an took the device and slammed the pick blade into the metal ceiling of the elevator. With the pick embedded forcefully into the metal, K'an pressed the button that the guard had covered. There was a loud explosive clap released from the device, and from that a large hole had been ruptured in the ceiling; it was well large enough to crawl through. K'an released the remnants of the breaching device and he pulled himself out of the hole; he did not let go of the warm edge as he held himself to the roof of the elevator.

"Minors!" He screamed to best the near terminal velocity "Take my hand! One by one!" K'an, still holding himself crouched against the roof, held his hand partway into the elevator. Rtik quickly took hold of his hand and K'an pulled him from the elevator. K'an hand him hold the side of the opening.

"Minor!" K'an screamed in a rapturous manner. "Take my hand now, warrior! We are leaving!"

Vera could barely hear K'an due to the roar of the air resistance against the elevator; he was incomprehensible in that sense. K'an took Rtik and held him wrapped in one arm; he knew that it was too late to get Vera. Vera was just starting to reach for the opening; the surface was too close to get enough time to get him out of the opening to save him. The elevator tube opened ended before the elevator reached the surface, giving K'an about 40 meters of jumping space.

K'an activated his jump pack, the jets rotated out from his shoulder harness and the thrusters belched a rapid jet of flame. The thrusters were only designed for a single Sangheili's weight, but it had managed to slow K'an and Rtik to a near halt. The thrusters carried the two a few meters away from the building before the thrusters turned partly off; they started to descend quickly from the thruster's brief cool down lag. K'an looked downward between his legs to see the elevator slam into the concrete that lay below, the breaking sound of glass shattering rang out as the metal crunched into the hard bottom that the tracks lay on.

The thrusters were not too efficient on carrying the both of them; it had slowed the drop to a survivable rate though. As soon as he could, K'an dropped Rtik; with one last puff from the two jets, K'an slowed his decent as much as he could, then fell. Once he collided with the ground he let his legs limply fall beneath him to he could roll quickly forward; this took all of his vertical motion and made it to face forth motion. K'an stood on pained legs and started immediately making his sore self to the crashed elevator. About this time the other elevator slowly lowered its self safely to the surface.

K'an ignored the other elevator and the two that were inside and

continued to the half intact elevator. No, the elevator was not intact, the entire bottom half was shattered and the only part that was together was the metal roof with a half of meter of glass holding the weight just off the ground. K'an reached for the metal lip of the roof, and after breaking small shards from it to grip; he struggled to lift the top.

"Aid me brother!" K'an yelled after finding he could not lift it by himself. Sig, Rtik, and Ryau quickly got over to K'an and they began to move the heavy lid.

"You are wasting energy" Sremm, who was not helping, started to criticize. "There is no way he survived." The group ignored him.

Finally budging the metal, the group rolled the disk on its edge till it fell back to lean to the side. Vera had been covered underneath. He was barely alive and far from an attractive sight. His limbs had been shattered and his armor had been crushed inward in many places; his blood covered his armor and the ground under him; some of his organs were visible as the large shards of exploding glass torn tears all over Vera's body. Much to his surprise, he was still alive. The Minor breathed softly as he lay there, unable to move.

"Do we have any woundâ€|?" Sig began but stopped mid-sentence; the Minor had begun to speak.

"I'll be-â€| I'll be alright?" The Minor asked; his pupils were tight and frantic. A little bit of purple blood spatter dripped from his maw as he spoke. "Will I, sir?!" Vera demanded; the flick of fear flowed through his young eyes.

"Yesâ€| yes, you will be fine" K'an spoke to him softly, trying to keep the Vera as he could

"Uhhâ€|" Sig spoke as he realized K'an was giving Vera false hope. He knew what K'an was going to do "hey guys, help me over here" Sig trotted a distance away, he was followed by Ryau "Now!" He called at Rtik; Rtik followed reluctantly.

"I amâ€| I will be fine!" Vera coughed out, assuring himself. More blood flowed from his torso and maw. "The bonesâ€| justâ€| my bones will heal"

K'an knelt beside him "yesâ€| they will." K'an agreed softly, just enough to where Vera could be hopelessly soothed.

"I will go homeâ€| it will all be better" Vera continued to cough. "I'll see my fatherâ€| He will be so proud."

"Yes you will; he will be proud"

"I'll be a heroâ€|" Vera's voice trailed off.

"Oh, yes. A hero! We couldn't have done it without you."

"I- I can see itâ€|" Vera gave a hard, ragged cough.

"Close your eyes" Vera did, listening to K'an. "Imagine your paradeâ€| the pride, the honor". K'an looked down, frowning at the

delusional youth. He was lying to the youth, of course, about being well.

"I can see it!" Vera exclaimed; his eyes danced under his eyelids.

K'an quietly took his needle rifle from his back. He took the weapon and put the barrel to his head; it's horizontally split barrel tip was mere centimeters from his forehead. This was the only thing he could do; it was the only humane way to go about this situation. He let Vera ramble softly through the youth's mental wishes for just a few more moments until he pulled the trigger. K'an could practically feel every centimeter that the powerful bolt slid down towards the tip of the barrel as it threw one single shard of pinkish crystal into Vera's head, giving him a quick and painless execution.

K'an stood slowly, putting the weapon back onto his back carefully, his hand stung from a shard of glass that had gotten into his left hand. He didn't dare pull it out as he stood straight and looked around to find that Sremm was the only one there; he watched idly nearby.

"You should have put him out of his misery when you dug him up" Sremm harshly spoke "You've only injured yourself."

"Oh well" K'an grumbled as he clenched his fist tightly, cringing as the shards dug themselves deeper into his skin. "ah-" he scoffed to himself softly and he soon knelt back next to Vera.

He took Vera's scratched helmet and placed it respectfully over his face. K'an took the blood from his palm and, after removing the shard of glass, he drew the Forerunner symbol of 'passing'. K'an stood once again and he wiped the blood from his palm off on a nearby Human tree. He put his bloody finger to the side of his ear, opening the communication links to open for him to speak.

"Naki, we have a KIA... report" K'an attempted to warn her several times, however it would seem as the radio links could not cut through the dense overhead layer of fog. "Anyone else hurt?" He asked, looking around at the now returning squad mates. Sig had remained composed, as had Ryau, and Rtik was clearly not; his eyes were red from a recent loss of his lunch.

They all reported no. Good... he thought.

"I'm frosty, sir" Sig responded, causing K'an to smile somewhat.

"Very good, Sig... now Rtik, Sremm, connect to my headgear" K'an ordered the Minor as he paid attention to the small list in the left lower corner of his HUD.

The list was made of two names and ranks next to two sky blue dots. The dots and names were listed by rank from top down; at the top was 'SM G3 Valhamee' and below him was 'SM G1 Cinotee'. Quickly a 'Ma G2 Vakrelee' appeared on the list between Sig and Ryau and after a few moments of Rtik clumsily messing with his helmet an entry was added to the bottom of the list. A 'M G1 Remamee'

"Well" K'an paused to consider; he looked around at the surrounding



buildings. "We have no communications or directive bearings to traverse by." He pointed out.

"Sir! There is a human map" Sig alerted K'an, pointing to just off of K'an's back side.

Behind K'an was a large holographic span that held a bird's eye view of the immediate area of the concrete jungle. A little red dot indicated where the map was located. K'an quickly made his way over to the span and stood with his arm crossed and a knuckle at his lower mandible tips. Before long, K'an was forcefully shoved to his left

"Move aside" Said an ego-dominant Sremm as he shunted passed K'an "I can read their language" K'an looked at him, taken back by Sremm's sheer audacity at his actions. "There appears to be a military base in here" he stated as he pointed at a building tucked neatly within a small parkway.

"Idiot! That is an apparel store!" K'an barked harshly at the Major. "No more leading for you, now step aside, youth" K'an snarled at the look that Sremm was giving him. "Always got to be heroes, I don't understand it. They send these children here to play and then the veterans like I have to deal with it!" K'an continued, grumbling in a near ranting state. He stopped quickly though to compose himself.

K'an, after pacing from his near rant, stopped nearby at a small human piece that was fixed to a nearby railing that over looked a small courtyard below on a lower level than the group was. The piece was a stand of metal with a horizontal disc with a triangle wedged down the middle. The tip of the triangle was pointed severely to the courtyard at an acute angle from being level with the disc. K'an gave a slight smile when he realized that this was a sun dial; An environmental compass.

"Do you require assistance, sir?" Rtik spoke from behind "I actually do understand the language" The Minor stated as he stopped, standing next to K'an.

"No, that is not neededâ€¦ We need to head westward. I have the map scanned and on my HUD and I will send it to you all." He took a second to do just that. "Come along, children" K'an turned with a bit of a somewhat satisfied grin, shouldered his rifle, and started off from Rtik down a nearby staircase.

From the courtyard the group took to the streets, lifting themselves over some of the many deserted wedges that the humans considered to be cars that littered the streets. The vehicles had most likely not been left there longer than an hour or so, lights still turned on and engine running quietly. There was no one in sight, the only living sounds were the occasional lasting whir of a police car's siren and the sounds of fighting, both from above and from other sections of the city. Several blocks when like this, the group dodged around stationary vehicles of many sizes. Rtik trailed just behind K'an, he seemed edgy, fearful of they might encounter in the street. Sig was quietly keeping an eyeful pace with Cinotee; the two spoke softly occasionally.

K'an dropped to his knee next to a black box truck that had the

letters "NAPD" along the side. The truck had been rendered immobile by a present and obvious collision at an intersection. The truck had curved somewhat to the side of the road; its front had been crushed by a collision. With a held fist in the air, K'an signaled for the others to stop and drop themselves along the truck. Rtik stopped clumsily just behind K'an, and Sig moved around Rtik and stood, pressed against the truck with his shoulder, behind K'an in order to watch over K'an's head. Sig gave K'an a little nudge with his knee in the shoulder to let him know that Sig was behind him. Cinotee had turned around, all without direction but in instinct, and covered behind them. K'an and Sig scanned around and over the hood of the truck for opposition.

"Hey!" Rtik cried out. His Beam Rifle clattered loudly on the cement. K'an looked back to see that Sremm had shoved Rtik from where he had already been.

"Check yourself, Sremm." K'an scolded him as Rtik recollected his weapon. "We work as a team, not as individuals" Rtik had found another spot behind Ryau.

K'an turned back from the two youths and reached back to give Sig's leg a forward sweep with his fingertips, signaling a brief advance. The two inched forward towards the nose of the truck, K'an watched cautiously off to the group's right side corner and Sig edged the barrel of his Plasma Repeater as he looked over the hood and down the street. A few paces in front of the truck the street collided with another in a four direction parallel. There was only a single vehicle that lay in the center of the intersection, and the street that ran parallel was mostly clear of obstructions. Ahead, further down the road, was a large pile of cars that would prevent ground vehicles, but it could be journeyed passed with some nimble footwork. The building, K'an noticed, on the opposing corner seemed dead; its windows had all been shot out and broken by a prior explosion that had left a huge gaping hole in one of the sides. The building looked as if it was near collapse. The dark openings that were left where the windows had been made K'an weary, it made a perfect pillbox for a sniper.

"Sig" K'an spoke softly as he gently drew himself back behind the front, Sig had as well.

"Sir?"

"Go back and break the lock on the back doors of this vehicle, they look previously opened. We need to collect any useful materials and supplies."

"Aye, it will be done, sir." Sig crept back, stepping quietly around Rtik and Sremm, and he informed Ryau of the order and began to work on such.

K'an's hand moved back to the point that he could set his needle rifle in the broken window and aim out the blown-out windshield. The keying claps of heavy machine guns drummed out from several blocks away, the shocks of distant explosion would occasionally reverberate off of the slick glass towers along the street. He found it quite unsettling.

"There is nothing here! Let's go!" Sremm called out loudly as he

pushed passed K'an.

"Sremm! Get back!" K'an snarled cautiously. He had taken his barrel out of the window to focus on Sremm.

"No! There is nothing here, it's clear. Now come on you senile eld-" Sremm was abruptly but the loud thunderclap of a Human sniper rifle; his shields flashed brightly as they broke from all that they could sustain.

"Get down before your head is taken off!" K'an yelled as he quickly sent a few rounds into one of the dark openings that the line of smoke left from the round.

Sremm danced wildly as he dove for cover behind the truck once again, K'an had suppressed the sniper from view long enough for Sremm to make it back. K'an kept a watchful eye down his sights at the opening, watching for any movement. He fired a few shots at some movements. They didn't hit anything, but they were cracked attempts to keep the sniper suppressed. Sig had come back from the rear opening of the truck, he possessed great news.

"Sir, there are several racks of multiple class of weaponry. Everything from hand weapons to a few turret-like weapons." Sig informed him.

"Good! we will need it!" K'an shouted as a pair of Human Warthogs, one transport class and the other was the average rotary cannon carriage, slide to a halt near the burning vehicle in the intersection.

Rtik went back to the rear of the truck and a group of humans all piled out of their transports; there were six total passengers from the passenger vehicle and another human from the other one. The transport Warthog took off back down the road and the rotary gun on the back of the other unleashed a hail of anti-personal rounds, all three of its barrels spun wildly. K'an ducked his head back behind the truck as the shots riddled the hood and bounced off onto the building behind. K'an waited several moments, he was currently alone as Rtik was immobile with the first firefight syndrome, Sremm was experiencing shellshock, and Ryau and Sig were in the back of the vehicle.

K'an glanced out briefly and with his bearings set, he proceeded to fire his rifle blindly over the hood of the truck. This method was unsuccessful due to the loss of sight and the rifle being a semiautomatic weapon. K'an lowered his rifle and set it on the concrete at his feet. He reached for his utility belt and took from it another fist size contraption. Turning a knob on the top, a small plasmite bulb appeared on the upward end. He took the device tightly in fist and through flashing shields he slammed its downward end to the hood of the truck. A small new window appeared in the top left corner of his HUD; it was a camera view of the intersection from the hood. The device he had placed was nothing short of a redeploy capable camera spike; it was something that long distance marksmen, in human terms a sniper, only carried.

K'an turned back to Rtik and Sremm who were still as stationary as they were before. "Rtik!" K'an yelled and Rtik's head jolted towards his direction. "Get over here and take my place!" Rtik gave a scared

look. "Just fire your weapon and stay down. Your shields will hold against a few shots. Now move and do not get religious on me!" K'an ordered and Rtik reluctantly took his place.

K'an quickly went to the back where Ryau and Sig were messing around inside trying to inventory the inside contents. Sig fumbled with the clamps on some of the equipment while Ryau logically tried to explain it to him from behind.

"What we got?" K'an asked loudly to Sig.

"I have unlocked several of the weaponry from their bindings. We have explosives and we have a long range rifle on the bench there." Sig pointed behind him. K'an took it and four of the clips of large ammunition that sit next to it.

"We need to use this weaponry as there is a supply here; waste nothing that we cannot afford to lose. Sig, hand me one of the light machine guns and you two pick you're choosing." He told them, sliding a large magazine into the weapon and pulling back the gaudy slide.

Sig handed K'an one of the two large human weapons that K'an could identify as a M319-D6 SAW I, a light machine gun that was similar in design on the MA5 platform. K'an primed the weapon and waited as Sig took a hold of one of the MA5B that leaned against one of the racks. Sig looked at Ryau's lack of movement.

"I thought using human weapons was not allowed." Ryau asked in a confused manner.

"First off, it is your decision. In history when we fought all who opposed and as a proud race, we treated the oppositions with the utmost respect, as if they were a fine art or craft." K'an answered, glancing over the corner to watch Rtik still spraying aimlessly over the hood, Sremm still did nothing. "That demographic was set by the ignorant. I say that if it is your life in your hands; you use what you find and comfort with." he paused "No offence to our engineering or the forerunners, but our beam rifles are crap to the human long rifles..."

"Fine then" Ryau muttered.

"Any thoughts on such a topic?" K'an leaned forward and turned his head to insinuate his listening. "No, I didn't think so." He reeled back "they brainwash you for so long, it's hard to see the light. Now... let's get to work gentlemen" K'an turned and moved back to the side where Sremm still lay.

"My battery is dead, sir!" Rtik yelled. K'an was already there to hand him his Needle rifle and some ammo.

K'an looked at Sig and Ryau. "You two are to go that way and fire at the group of Humans" K'an pointed towards the middle of the road, the direction the rear of the truck was facing "Distract them and I will take care of the sniper and that gunner." K'an ordered. "Now go!"

Sig gave a quick nod to Ryau and then he shouldered the Human Assault Rifle. Sig lead Ryau in a side strafe in amidst the cars, the two firing their weapons madly at the humans. The two only ducked to

cover as their shields began to fail. They then set themselves against the cars, using them as cover, and proceeded to blindly fire around the edges. K'an could see the two of the individual Humans drop to the cement from the backlashing fire.

K'an, seeing as the Human's focus was on Ryau and Sig, moved up with the Long rifle shouldered around the hood of the truck. He quickly got the dot of the electronic scope onto the gunner's side and pulled the trigger. The rifle kicked hard, the stock shoved back into K'an's strong shoulder forcefully, as a thunderclap left the barrel that propelled a single huge 14.5mm piece of lead straight into the gunner's side. The gunner's arm came detached at the elbow as he was shoved off of the back of the truck. The driver sped off quickly, turning himself and the vehicle from danger. K'an swung the long firearm to the broken opening to fire a round into the sniper that had pinned them down in the first place

With rounds being sent to the Humans from two angles, the Humans began to retreat into the half destroyed building. The fight was not over they realized after a brief pause as, with a very loud entrance, a Human 808B Scorpion tank slammed through the large pile up of cars further down the street. The large tank rolled through the cars quickly, shoving the metal pieces aside like toys, until it came to a stop before the intersection. The large shiny barrel fired an earthshaking shock that would punt a large shell into the building just above the truck. Bits and debris of the building cascaded outward, spraying all over the road, causing Rtik to scream like a child.

"Armor!" Sig shouted loudly "Ryau lets go, on the left, back down the street."

"Very nice, run!" K'an yelled; he turned to see Sremm leaving first, Rtik was right behind him.

K'an found himself sprinting through the mess of cars, sometimes dodging them with only centimeters to spare. The tank cruised behind them, plowing cars over, punting several rounds around them. Due to their sporadic maneuvers, none of the shells hit on target. The tank chased them down the street as far as they would go, K'an out of the group was the fastest runner and he sprinted off ahead of them.

"Do not stop until I say!" K'an yelled as he ran ahead passed them.

K'an kept pulling ahead till he reached the end of the street; the only direction the street turned was left. He stood tall, shouldering the long rifle and aimed carefully into the scope's screen. The tank barreled down the street towards him, the group was now reaching the corner, and the tank had been slightly halted by a mass of larger vehicles. K'an took careful aim and fired a single round into the lid of the cockpit of the tank. The round nicked itself barley into the cabin and dinged around widely inside, tearing the driver up viciously.

With the driver's dead and his heaping flesh managed from the large caliber bullet, his weight had apparently rested on the controls of the tank. The tank suddenly turned right into the corner building, the tank had slammed through most of the building's supports and this caused the building to crumble into the street, blocking all further

vehicular followers in the wake that the tank had left.

"Nice shot, sir!" Sig called out from the loom of dust that had fogged the street, the screen of the dust made it difficult to see.

"Let us not dwell on the past, please" K'an replied "Let us get moving."

That was apparently not what someone wanted. "Let us take five, we just outran a Tank!" Sremm complained.

"No" K'an rolled his eyes "We must keep moving."

"I am not moving!"

"I will only say this once, Sremm, do not forget who is the elder and who is the youth; who the Shepard is, and who his flock is." K'an growled at Sremm's opposition.

"You know not of what you speak of, you crazed senile."

"Child! I will beat you like the woman you act like; I will break you to the effect that your ancestry shall feel" K'an shouted viciously at him. However, after some moments of giving Sremm a grim stare, Central Communications started to try to contact him.

"Special Operations Major Retmaree, by the gods it has been difficult to raise you." A deep male voice spoke through the connection; the connection was clear enough through the somehow thinning layer of fog overhead.

"Yes, Communications, we have been grounded within the buildings. The fog is terrible down here."

"Be that as it mayâ€¦ there are some troublesome factors at play for you." The voice sounded off with a taint of burden.

K'an looked around at the group. "Sremm gets his wishâ€¦ rest for five" K'an told them as he went into a nearby alley for some privacy.

"Your commanderâ€¦ Commander Tallaham. His Phantom was shot down on the entre of the lower atmosphere of the planet."

"What?" K'an questioned, his mandibles tightened together.

"Tallaham is KIA. I'm sorry" the connection was cut to silence.

K'an stood in the alleyway that had stairs that led downward to a garden; slowly he lowered his finger from his ear. As he did he found himself looking down at the dirty cement, his eyes looking to the settling dust as if it had an answer for him. The dirt whispered no answer to his hearing and he was forced to face his torn psyche. K'an turned to the mouth of the alley and sat quietly down on a bench just outside of the opening. He sat with his face in his palms, thinking of how to react. His best friend was dead, yes, but D'rok had wanted to die for many years. Stupidly K'an had never thought to actually think about the lasting effects that would follow.

"Major, are you alright?" Sig, who had approached as he saw K'an suddenly make a depressed turn, asked.

"I am not"

"Are you hurt?"

"No" K'an groaned with his face still at his palms.

"Then what?"

"Tallaham is KIA— his Phantom was shot down." K'an groaned again, he had somehow managed to stay half composed.

"I'm glad he's gone!" Sremm piped up, his sudden insults made every sane nerve ending in K'an's body to nearly split down the middle. "I never have to see his rotten old face again. Ill finally be promoted."

"What did you just say?" K'an growled his inquisition as he slowly looked up at the soon to be slain major. Off to K'an's side, Sig was frantically at wits end attempting to halt Sremm's speech.

"...and why is this?"

"Because the commander and I didn't exactly get along." Sremm answered smartly.

"I think I know why"

"What are you implying, Major?" Sremm seemed offended.

"You have a big mouth!"

"What I have, Major, is a reluctance to follow orders from someone clearly beneath me!"

"Are you saying that you run this outfit, child!?" K'an yelled, standing now.

"I'm saying that I refuse to follow an old man lost in the past!" Sremm retorted.

"Both of you shut up!" Rtik yelled, clearly agitated by the uproar.

"Oh shut up, idiot. You were never useful in this entire situation!" Sremm yelled back.

"Maybe I could have helped if you'd moved the 600 unit alloy beam off of me!"

"It matters not, you can't shoot!"

"I'm only a bad shot when you stand in front of my weapon insisting you can hit the soldier on the machine gun from there. I've hit smaller targets from at least fifty times as far and you know it!" Rtik yelled as he got into Sremm's face.

"As a higher ranking officer, I am entitled to do whatever I wish

with my squad. You have no jurisdiction here." Sremmm gave a hard shove to Rtik, pushing the smaller one away like nothing. Sremmm pointed a finger at Rtik "You will face charges of insubordination should you make it out of this alive, I assure you. And you" Sremmm looked at K'an "I owe nothing to you or your idiotic woman that you consider a friend!"

That last low throw at D'rok was the last straw for K'an witnessed of the quickly aspired situation. With a feral roar, K'an dove to Sremmm in a full bodied tackle. The sheer force from the K'an's weight was enough to send him and Sremmm into a roll. At the end of such, K'an had his weight on Sremmm's abdomen. K'an repeatedly started to strike at Sremmm's face; it was unsuccessful due to Sremmm having his arms up to protect his face. Eventually Sremmm was able to shove K'an off of him.

K'an quickly recovered, immediately he was in position to strike with an armored fist as Sremmm stood. From that blow Sremmm's head jerked away, when it came back K'an wrapped his arm around Sremmm's neck and proceeded to shove his knee into Sremmm's midsection. This happened several times before Sremmm had managed to wiggle himself from K'an's grip, he had tripped K'an. Sremmm had gotten a bit of a lead on K'an with two left hooks, one which missed and the other found its place on K'an's cheek. Sremmm then tried to stamp his boot down onto one of K'an's shin, hoping to ground K'an. In a fluent motion, K'an slid his endangered hooves back from Sremmm's dropping boot; using a bit of quick reflexes, K'an swiftly kicked his hoof up into Sremmm's chin. The snap of colliding mandible guard and teeth were quite audible.

The thunder clap of a Human sniper rang out suddenly; a sound that could easily shatter glass had no found effect on the two brawling soldiers. The rest of the group, whom K'an was paying no attention to, scattered for cover and retaliated to whoever under Sig and Ryau's command. Luckily for the two, the sniper would pay more attention to the rest of the group who returned fire. Back within the fray, Sremmm stood with his fists raised; he spat out blood and a few teeth and took a step back. Hate and fury ran through his eyes in the realization that he most likely could not win an even fight with K'an. He is lucky, rather, that it was K'an. If this was D'rok then he would have already been dead. So smartly Sremmm reached down to his hip and drew his sword and heightened the severity of the fight.

Sremmm gave a quick snarl before swinging his sword forward. His swing missed and he rendered himself unguarded for a moment. K'an took his chance during that moment gripped Sremmm's wrist and forced the arm back behind Sremmm. Sremmm dropped the sword as a nice and vulgar pop erupted from his shoulder, telling both of them that it had been dislocated.

K'an took a single step back from the screaming Sangheili, Sremmm's arm hung loose by his side and it pained him very bad. In a final attempt to retaliate, the desperate Sremmm grabbed K'an by the collar suddenly and pulled him closer. Sremmm was trying to put K'an against a nearby wall, but he, instead, misbalanced himself and pulled both of them over a railing that overlook a garden setting below. Sremmm screamed loudly in K'an's ear and K'an acted quickly in putting Sremmm between him and the rushing ground. With a clang Sremmm's body took the blunt of the fall, his body would go silent into an unconscious



state.

## 9. Act02 Ch03 SKiNA

**\*\*SGTLEGENDKILLED\*\***

**\*\*Fate Continuum\*\***

### Act II Chapter II

"Seven Kilometers in New Alexandria"

K'an groaned with a pained and rumbling tone as he pushed himself up from the unconscious body of the young Major. Sremm looked nearly untouched other than a small patch of his cheek that had begun bleeding from the faceoff. K'an stood and dusted his arms off; he cracked a smile as he knew deep down that the youth would most likely not make the shallow decision to challenge him in the near future. K'an looked around at the four lane road that the two had fallen onto from the over pass above. They had fallen between the lanes of stopped vehicles that had been abandoned there previously. It would seem as the immediate area had already been evacuated. That was good, as K'an did not want to deal with civies.

"Sir! Are you alright?!" A voice called from the overpass above. K'an looked up to see Sig looking frantically down at him.

"Yes, I'm fine." K'an answered after looking himself over quickly. "Are you two holding up?" K'an tilted his head slightly at him.

"Fairly well, sir." Ryau answered as he too peered his gaze of the side of the overpass.

"Same here, sir" Sig noted.

"Good..." K'an grumbled as his gaze lowered onto a nearby pedestrian staircase to the overpass above.

He then looked back to the downed Major. With a scoff he turned away. The inexperienced youth made not much more than dead weight. He was not a baby sitter, and therefore he decided to let the Major lay to fend for himself. With a few strides he rejoined Rtik, Ryau, and Sig back onto the overpass

"Youth" K'an started at Ryau. Ryau's left eye seemed to twitch at the label "How much ammunition do you have left?"

"Two cartridges for needle rifle and three clips for the MA5." Ryau answered after he gathered a quick inventory.

"Good... Keep that Human weapon close" K'an turned his head, hearing the distant noise of fire fights and screaming civilians. "As I told you all before, we may need all we can carry" He points out before he goes to retrieve the Human Sniper and his Type 31 from the concrete. With a firm grip and a floating index over the trigger he takes hold of the Type 31 whilst placing the Sniper to his back. "Are you ready to continue on?" He asked.

"Of course." Ryau replied.

K'an looked up into a skyward direction. "Command? We need an evac" All he got back was static as the fog was still restricting communication. "Alright" he looks back at the three "One of us needs to get on top of one of these buildings." He started.

"Do we not have a visual system we can use to see a building that penetrates the fog layer?" Ryau asked.

"Negative... Sorry." Sig replies.

"Perhaps the Humans had some sort of device in the lockers?" Ryau added intelligently.

"They might... But where to find them..." K'an gave a quick look around. Clearly there were no lockers in the middle of the road.

"Sir!" Sig piped up "If we sent someone to the top of that building, they could act as a midpoint to command on the comms!" Sig enthusiastically pointed his finger to a nearby apartment complex.

"Very good, Sig. Always good to have a Tech on the ground" K'an commended Sig for his quick input. "Who volunteers?" The group lay silent as he asked.

"We draw sticks? Shortest has to go up" Ryau suggested.

"Do we have 'sticks'?" Sig asked Ryau, tilting his head.

Ryau plucked a branch from a tree on the side of the overpass. "Now we do."

"Let me see those, Cinotee" K'an held his hand out to Ryau for the twigs. As Ryau handed them, K'an shuffled them between his fingers quickly. "Go ahead, youths" Sig quickly drew a medium sized one, Ryau drew one the same size as Sig, and Rtik received the smallest. K'an gave a quick chuckle to this.

With an annoyed stamp of his hoof, Rtik started his way off to the building grumbling. The group follows him to the doorway as he enters muttering under his breath. "Tell me when you have reached the top, Minor" K'an ordered.

"Got it" Rtik hastily replied. The group waited just a few slow minutes for the 'go' "I'm here!" Rtik replied suddenly. He sounded fatigued as he panted into the com piece. Without giving it a second thought, K'an started to configure the connection.

"Command, this is a hail from K'an 'Retmaree of Far Beyond Provocation. Are you receiving?" K'an asked.

"Far beyond Provocation, Command responds to your hail" The relayed signal seemed to greatly appreciate.

"Great" K'an sighed hopefully. "We need an Evac point... Please mark one for us" he requested.

"Understood, Marking now" a beacon appears, seven kilometers away.

"Gods! Where the sin is that?!" K'an exclaims.

"The only clear area we can guarantee."

"Ahh fine. We will arrive as soon as we can." K'an told the contact.

"Good luck" the connection was cut at the source.

"Alright, Rtik...return when possible. Good work." K'an orders

However, Ryau spots a series of hostile movement from which they came. "K'an! Incoming hostiles!"

At that moment, a Gauss round sails past the party. Shaking the ground slightly as it punched a hole through a nearby pillar. "Move! Across the street into that lobby!" K'an barked and he motioned to a pair of open glass doors in the door across the street.

Ryau jumped and rolled down the wheelchair ramp. Sig darts behind K'an as they sprint across the two lane street. The Warthog mounted Gauss fires twice more in vain as the gunner tries to hit one of the Sangheili

K'an turns once inside, shouldering his Type 31 at the approaching Warthog. "Keep going you two! Get deeper into the building!" K'an cracks a few shots through the glass at the vehicle.

"Doing that!" Ryau ran through a doorway, into an internal hallway, Sig following Ryau. K'an cracks a few more shots as he backpedals in swifts behind them. He lowered the gun and turns to sprint after them. The hallway turns to the right suddenly. The trio slide around the corner, Sig was already checking the further part of the hallway as they rounded the corner, K'an stopped behind Ryau as he plants his back against the corner. He checked around the corner back towards the lobby for the vehicle.

"Clear" Sig announced as he stared down the barrel of the Human Light Machine Gun. "Everyone ok?" He asked without averting his aim.

Ryau nodded, looking over his weapons.

"Vocally, Cinotee. He cannot hear head shaking." K'an softly pointed out. "And I'm fine, Sig." K'an finishes as he turned from the corner to face them. He raises his Type 31 down the hall. "Let us keep moving."

"I'm fine."

"Very good" K'an stated.

"What about Rtik, sir?" Sig asked.

K'an paused. "We will have to leave him. The area just got too heated." K'an answered then turns his head to Ryau "Ryau! On my left. Keep cautious and we will traverse this hall." He orders

Ryau nodded and moved to K'an's left. "Should we not leave him a message?"

"I don't think we can. Especially if he is up in the fog" Sig pointed out

"Let's quickly write it on the wall, should he come back down. Something like: Had to move" Ryau suggested.

"With what?" K'an asks

"There are charred pieces of tree and metal around, the very least we can carve it into the wood."

K'an looks back at some explosions that sound from the entrance of the building following the sounds of multiple sets of footsteps. "We do not have time."

"We cannot just leave him." Ryau demanded.

"First lesson of the fray: Don't get attached." K'an shoved forward. "Now move, Majors!" He barked.

Ryau moved reluctantly.

The trio moved quickly down the hall. They made it only a bit more than half way when the Humans could be heard just beyond the corner. "Majors!" K'an orders softly "Activate cameo" K'an fades to a faint outline quickly as he turns his on. Sig immediately fades as well. Ryau fiddled with his controls, and then he too disappeared.

"Against the walls, Majors..." K'an suggested quietly as his outline moves to the wall while moving forward still. Ryau moved on over.

The three moved as quickly as they could to the end of the hall. Once through the mouth of the corridor, they exited out into a shadowed garden setting. K'an led the three into another open hall that was connected to the small boxed garden. As they quickly slipped into that hall they lost the pack of Humans behind them as they entered another lobby. K'an undid his cameo and exited through the doorway. Ryau and Sig follows suit.

"Which direction..." K'an muttered, glancing around at his HUD. "Any ideas?"

"In the general direction of the marker." Ryau said.

"Which street..." K'an looked around.

"You're the leader,"

"Thank you, Major Obvious..." K'an retorted with a growl. "Now come on." K'an shrugged as he turned away from the previous building and up the street. No Humans were visible at the time, however the remains of an already evaced area lay waste in the street. He led them around the left side corner cautiously while looking out for any more patrols. At the end of the street K'an saw what appeared to be a

small outpost or road block that occupied the center of the intersection. Whichever it was, it was heavily fortified. He knew they couldn't blast their way through that. In front of the roadblock was a single Warthog equipped with a Gauss turret on the back. He waved the trio forward and turned on his cameo systems. The two following him faded to faint outlines as he did. He led them quietly towards the roadblock. From the other direction some troops were approaching the outpost.

'Down' K'an commanded very softly to the two, motioning to them as he rested himself on his knee against a Human civilian vehicle that was parked alongside the road. Sig rested himself against another nearby civilian vehicle.

"Be at the ready, Majors" K'an softly prepped the two following him. The trio watched breathlessly as the rows of Humans moved past them.

"Are we clear?" Sig asked Ryau very softly as a Warthog rolled by after the Humans.

"Yes, we are" Ryau whispered.

"Alright, across the street and under that overhang" K'an motioned them to move

Ryau and Sig silently moved down the street, towards the overhang. K'an followed closely behind and they trio barely made it across the road as another Warthog came barreling down the road. The group stopped as soon as they met the dark wall of the opening under the overhang. K'an stopped.

"Is everyone still good?" K'an asked.

They nod, no sign of problem.

"Alright" He starts "Is there an open entrance through this building?" K'an asks

Ryau points to a door that was jammed in the open position.  
"There."

"Ok, Cinotee, take point"

Ryau stood and moved into the doorway, sweeping with his weapon. Sig is right behind him with his weapon raised with K'an behind. The lobby was abandoned, nothing around. However, a slightly illuminated sign announced it housed a tram station on the 34th floor. K'an looks around, lowering his rifle to his hip. He looked around, inspecting the surroundings as Ryau and Sig fanned slowly outward several feet.

"Shall we see if the tram is still working?" Sig questioned.

"Would they still be in operation?" K'an asked.

"At the very least they would be manual, and faster than on foot." Ryau said.

"And what of the possibility of alerting the Humans?" Sig questioned

Ryau. K'an let them reason fairly, with his ear turned to them to listen. "Is that worth the risk? For I would rather suffer a sore heel as opposed to another fall from a structural failure."

"Depends on how damaged it is, we haven't begun orbital bombardment yet. Correct?"

"Hmmâ€¦ Will it be fast enough to be efficient?"

"The map has it going right to the building that we need to get off at, it is a more direct route."

"But what will happen if we are discovered on the transport? Will they destroy it?"

"The tram tunnels are enclosed. You can't see out"

"Are you sure?"

"He must be, Sigâ€¦" K'an interrupted

"Did you not read his credentials? Ryau was at the top of his class in Combative Intelligence Studies. Even so he was in the margin higher than yours, Sig." K'an pointed out kindly.

Ryau just blinked.

"Very well" Sig muttered as he re-shouldered his weapon.

"Lead up the stairs, Sig" K'an commanded

"Yes sir" Sig responded and began to move.

"Come along, Cinotee" K'an noted into the direction that Sig was going. They moved up the many flights of stairs in the slightly damaged building. The stairwell was however, fully intact.

"I will apologize for getting after you earlier, Major" K'an spoke to Ryau as they climbed the stairs.

"Apology accepted." Ryau said.

"If you want the honest truthâ€¦ I never give too much respect to the well-studied until I see them hold their own in a firefight." K'an admits. "I have seen many young warriors fall who have excelled in the studies." He sighs, and Ryau just nodded. "I never was one much for the studyingâ€¦" K'an further admitted as he continued to hike up the staircases just behind Ryau. "I just was always good at fighting" he paused "Godsâ€¦ I've seen the start of this war and all the way throughâ€¦ It needs to end soon" K'an shares one of his views, hoping for conversation.

"I believe it will be ending soon, or else I wouldn't be here right now." Ryau muttered.

"What do you mean by that?"

"Nothingâ€¦ nothing."

"... I used to share the same thingâ€¦" K'an muttered "I mean, look

at the history booksâ€¦ Look at the number of warriors the 'oh righteous beyond space' Covenant has thrown at the Humans. It's a bit outlandish, don't you think?" K'an asked.

"It is only proportional to the amount that have not been sent against them."

"Hmm" He paused "Well maybe if we sent-" Sig cut K'an off.

"If you two are going to endlessly banter politics, I'll turn around and kick you both down these stairs" Sig chuckled.

"He is right" K'an paused briefly "We should quiet down a bit." The group pressed on up the flights of stairs for several moments further.

"Here we are." Ryau breathed out slowly as the group reached level 31 of the structure. An abandoned tram station stood before them. K'an looked around, papers drift across the empty station from a breeze coming out of the dark tube.

"So where is the transport?" Sig asked, looking around.

"Probably disabled because of our arrival, we will have to walk the rest of the distance. Or at least until we find the tram." Ryau said.

K'an walked over steadily to the ledge of the platform and leaned over just enough to look down the tracks in both direction. He took a moment to watch down both of the illuminated enclosed tubes that traveled both ways. His left pair of mandibles tightened slightly in an uneasy grimace, realizing that there would be more foot travel. It wasn't that he hated walking, it was just the risk of getting splattered by railed transport.

"Ok, let's get going, youths" K'an ordered as he turned his body to watch them get onto the tracks.

Ryau moved onto the dimly maintenance path and started down the tunnel. Sig shrugs and follows Ryau with K'an behind at the ready. Suddenly, K'an fell forward as his leg was taken out from under him by a metal pipe. Sig watched quietly as K'an groaned slowly after falling to the ground. Ryau reached back and offered a hand to K'an, and with a bit of a grunt, he used it to help him stand.

"Thanks" K'an told Ryau after brushing his armor off.

"You're welcome." Ryau said.

"Would you like to continue to lead, Ryau?" Sig asked.

"There is only one direction we can go, there isn't much too leading." Ryau let K'an and Sig pass him.

K'an walked first down the tight hall. With Ryau and Sig close behind, they all made their way down the long stretch of the transport length. For the most part it was quiet; the only exceptions to this were their footsteps, breathing, and the occasional clap and rumble of a distant explosion. The travel session was uneventful other than a quick stop to view out a side of the tunnel that had

been ripped open from an aircraft collision. After a while the group finally made it to a medium sized junction room that had two floors and several doors. Sig directed the group through one of the doors labeled "SinoViet North Tower Access" which led to another lengthy hall. Soon the hall began to curve and then ended abruptly with a door to a small lobby.

"This is our building" Sig quietly stated as he rested his weapon at his side.

"Now all we have to do is go upâ€¦" K'an growled at the thought of climbing even more stairs. "Is there an elevator anywhere?"

Ryau nodded to a bank of doorways along the outside wall of the building. "There they are."

"But which one?" Sig asked concerned.

"Press the button, find out." Ryau answered

"What button?"

"The UP button."

"You do it." One of Sig's eye ridges raised.

"Fine." Ryau pressed the UP button and the doors dinged open.

"If this is the way then lead on, Major" K'an waves on. They entered the elevator and Ryau pressed the button for the top floor.

"This is going to take quite a whileâ€¦" Ryau said.

K'an sighed as once again he was forced to listen to another set of generic soft jazz music as the elevator doors closed. His stomach churned at the tune that had begun to spill from the meshed speakers in the ceiling of the small elevator. K'an gave a quick rumbling growl.

"None of you guys are going to start licking the windows on me, right?" K'an asked suddenly, glancing quickly between the two. A slight smirk had formed over his mandibles.

"That wasn't funny K'an. He died." Ryau said, frowning.

"Yeah, well that seems to happen to everyone at some point" K'an shook his head slowly. "Nothing you can do about it but remember the time you had with the person." He paused for a long while until he burst into a chuckling fit "I can honestly say that in all of my years I have never seen a Sangheili licking a glass pan like a child with a sloppy food plate." K'an began to laugh whole heartedly.

"I guess so..." Ryau chuckled a bit. "A bit too soon though."

"Bah, they made jokes of the first Covenant loss on the transports returning to orbit" K'an looked up slightly "There is no 'too soon.'"

The elevator shuttered to a stop five floors under the roof top access, the lights flickered as something exploded far below. The



doors eased open into a dark office hallway. "I guess we're taking the stairs." Ryau muttered.

"Lead on." K'an nudged Ryau out towards the opening with his weapon raised.

Ryau nodded and led the group through a door marked Fire Exit. The stairs lead up into the darkness, the stairwell was only lit with emergency lighting. The other two followed right behind Ryau as he led them up the stairs; furthering their ascent up towards the top of the tower. Ryau opened the final door and was greeted by a gust of wind.

"Here we are." Ryau said.

"About time" Sig proclaimed as he raised his arm to shield his face from the gust.

"Is the Phantom here yet?" K'an squinted.

"I don't see one, but we're out of the fog so Comms should be back."

"Hello? Command?" Sig began as he stepped towards the opposite side of the building.

"Soâ€¦" K'an started, looking at Ryau. "What do you think after your first day with us?"

"Not something I'd like to do again." Ryau said.

"Aww c'mon, kid." K'an chuckled. "The day would have been more entertaining with D'rok around." K'an looked off to his side.

"And that is one of the reasons why I don't want to, K'an" Ryau said.

"Wellâ€¦ you could be deadâ€¦" K'an admitted with a shrug

"Doing something like this, again, increases those chances."

"Its warâ€¦ it happens." K'an sighed again. "If you stick close to D'rok and keep your head on straight you will be just fine"

"I don't plan on being here that long." Ryau shrugged.

"Is there anywhere you would rather be?" K'an chuckled in a jesting tone

"Back in the Science division." Ryau said. "Sometimes that is."

"I could understand that. Make us some better weapons, kid" K'an retorted with the shake of his head.

At this time a Phantom streaked the sky and slowed to a soft hover. As soon as it had come to a stop, the gravity lift opened up with a beaming fashion. Sig quickly made his way back over to K'an and Ryau. With an offering stature, K'an let the two enter first and waited patiently for them to get up into the belly of the Phantom. After they had disappeared into the opening of the beam, K'an followed

suit. As soon as the group was entirely on the Phantom, it began to leave the rooftop. As it did, K'an watched the rooftop shrink in the distance.

## 10. Act02 Ch04 Chasing The Demon

**\*\*SGTLEGENDKILLED\*\***

**\*\*Fate Continuum\*\***

Act II Chapter IV

>"Chasing The Demon"<p>

H.C.D: August 23, 2552

The air was tainted by the sharp nip of a slight chill. A soft breeze that had been slowly building over the period of several hours shoved warm damp air up over the side of the mountain face. The stench of gunpowder, smoke, and ozone from plasma usage lingered with the breeze on occasion. It was not that upsetting of a smell completely as the occasional front of sea smelling air moved along with the wind currents. The sun rested just over the ocean in the horizon, illuminating the peaks of the mountains and mostly what was left of the near anarchic chaos that was the Human city of New Alexandria. As the breeze had began to cross the city, meeting the city as the night approached, a blanket of fog had become to form between the ground level and the high rising buildings of the city.

K'an grimaced as he shielded his eyes from the sun's rays as he looked over the city. He had spent several long moments surveying the battle below the mountain ridge. Currently he was advising a mid-sized group of assorted Covenant troops as they built a large scale communications jammer on top of a plateau of the ridge line. The group was one of many who were building these jammers around the perimeter of the city. Several similar jammers had been placed in the city in order to scramble the forces inside of the city perimeter from one another. The Covenant was making sure that no communications were getting out to the rest of the planet. He further grimaced as the light reflected off of the hull of a passing group of Phantom. Naki approached him from behind.

"K'an, they are almost finished with assembly." She said.

"Goodâ€|" K'an paused, turning to her. "How are the other groups going?"

"Already done, however they started before we even arrived here."

K'an hummed softly in agreement and with a nod he turned back to the view of the city. "Something isn't right about thisâ€| This siege is taking too long."

"Its a siege, the Covenant does not usually perform sieges." Naki said. "Thats a problem right there."

"Well why this city, then?"

"There is a human intelligence center there. Other than that, I do

not know."

"There must be something special here." K'an admitted "For I have seen the Covenant drive through a much larger city and still get more of a grip on it than this."

"Perhaps, but we have to do this anyway. We have our orders." Naki shrugged.

"I understand thatâ€¦" K'an sighed, pausing once again. "However it does make you wonder if there are hidden motives."

"There are always hidden motives. I should get back to the jammer." Naki nodded and headed back to monitor the assembly.

"Very well. I think I shall join you." K'an turned and followed close behind her.

K'an looked past her to see how the jammer was coming along. Working on the large device were a pair of Huragok and several Unggoy aiding the construction. The Huragok were placing the final pieces of alloy onto the outer casing and the jammer powered up.

"Good" K'an started with his hands behind his back. "Now we wait for further orders." K'an paused once again. "Ryau!" He called out.

"What is it?" Ryau responded.

"Pull out some rations for the squad. Naki, go inform the others who have been assembling the jammer to feel free to eat their own rations." Ryau and Naki nodded and began their tasks.

K'an waited for their return. Ryau returned a few moments later lugging a crate of Field Rations. Once Ryau had set the set down, K'an let everyone else grab one before taking his. K'an took a rest on top of a decent size boulder and began to open his on his lap. He opened the packaging to find that it contained a serving of dried Muka Fish and a pair of Morla rolls. K'an took one of the rolls, split in half, and placed a large bit of fish in between the halves. He then took a bite and looked back onto the others nearby. He watched the other Sangheili eat theirs as he slowly eat his food. The fish was flavorful as it was a fish of the sea, the lace of salt and deeply pitted seasonings laced the easily breaking flesh.

"Far beyond Provocation. This is Minor 'Sannwikhee on the \_Leveling Strength\_. You are being repurposed, the Demon has been spotted in the vicinity of jammer 2." 'Sannwikhee reported. "Leave the assembly team and provide support for Ultra 'Valnsee."

"Which jammer?" K'an asked loudly as he lowered his sandwich to put his hand to his headset to hear.

>"The coordinates are being transferred to your tactical display. Hold." Sannwikhee said. A few moments passed and a waypoint appeared far into the city, in the vicinity of where they had been evacuated from the day before. "Understood?"<p>

"Understoodâ€¦" K'an looked towards the rest of the group. "We need to get going. Come on."

K'an stood from his spot and walked towards the other side of the jammer. He quietly passed the group of Unggoy who rested just off of the jammer to approach the pilot of a near by DX class Spirit transport. The Sangheili pilot was sitting down enjoying some delicious steamed Rika tail and a small serving Imusina cake. Ryau, Naki and Sig piled aboard past the pilot, leaving K'an standing in front of the pilot alone.

"We need to leave now." K'an told the pilot. The pilot gave a shocked look.

"We can not" The pilot stated.

"Why in the gods not?" K'an questioned rather loudly.

"It is for the reason that I am off duty" The pilot snickered.

"Tell that to the fleet master." K'an suddenly, in a spurt of anger, grabbed the pilot by his collar, took the key to the Spirit from his side. The pilot didn't have much time to react as K'an shoved him away from himself, sending the pilot onto his rear.

K'an quickly boarded the Spirit and stood before the controls. He slipped the key into the little holographic ignition bank and pressed a few buttons. The engines bursted to life as the craft began to warm. Outside K'an could see the pilot having a temper tantrum just outside of the craft.

"What's going on?" Ryau asked.

"Do not be bothered by it." K'an began to control the craft from it's hovering position. "It was just a simple act of insubordination." he answered without breaking his eyesight from the screen over the control panel.

"No, not that. What are we doing?" Ryau asked again. "What have we been reassigned to do."

K'an paused for several moments. "There was a Demon spotted within the city. We have been tasked with defeating it." The cabin grew quiet as the craft leveled out flat as it sped off towards the city. "I'm sorryâ€¦" K'an admitted. "I don't know how you all feel about this task."

"We just need to get it done." Ryau said.

"Do you honestly understand what must be done?"

"Yes, I do." He nodded. Sig could be seen nodding his head along side Ryau.

"Alright, hold on" K'an warned. With that, he suddenly dropped the pronged nose of the transport downward sharply just as the craft cleared the edge of the slope.

As he did, he slammed the thruster controls forward on full. The craft lurched and buckled harshly as it began to pick up quite the large amount of speed. K'an watched his fellow Sangheili struggle with their harnesses as the propulsion engines began to greatly whine loudly from the rear of the craft. The transport plunged quickly,

losing altitude at nearly the pace of freefall. After several moments of this, K'an pulled the nose of the craft upwards as fast as it would go. The rear of the craft struggled to keep up with the direction the front was aimed at. The craft quickly leveled out however and pushed on at speeds higher than a cruising speed. K'an pushed the craft to it's brink directly to the location of the assigned beacon.

"This is Special Operations team, Far Beyond Provocation. We need multiple transports of heavy reinforcements to head to inner city jammer at location two. Is anyone close?" K'an questioned loudly over the local communication broadcast. He had to speak over the noise of electronics and the deep rumbling of the craft's engines.

"This is Phantom \_Guiding Light\_ I am currently holding a pair of Mgalekgolo. We are at your disposal, Far Beyond Provocation." Another transport answered his hail.

"Remain on stand by for now." K'an replied.

"Yes sir." Guiding Light replied.

The transport rocked to the left sharply as K'an piloted the craft around the side of a building. The craft shook for a moment as the fast moving metal craft lanced just a few short meters from the side of the building. K'an went as fast as he could as he banked the transport around several more buildings. However, as the onboard computer listed that they were less than fifteen hundred meters from the jammer, the communications went off again.

"Far beyond Provocation. This is once again \_Guiding Light\_. \_We have been ordered to reinforce jammer at inner city location one. Sorry." The pilot said.

"Which jammer, we will accompany you!"

"All Lances, The first jammer has been destroyed, strengthen all defences, the Demon is in the vicinity." Command stated over the broadcast.

"Which jammer is it heading too? We will respond." K'an asked.

"Unknown, all jammers are being assaulted by human ground forces"

"Which has the highest need of aid?"

"Far Beyond Provocation, you are to continue to provide support to Ultra 'Valnsee at jammer three. Your orders have not changed."

"Very well." K'an replied.

K'an continued to pilot the craft speedily towards the jammer. Suddenly, the Spirit vibrated as overhead, a CCS-Class Battlecruisers rumbled high above the skyline. Finally the Spirit came into view of the building cluster's main landing pad. The jammer had been placed a few levels below, but this was the only way inside. The landing pad was placed on the roof of a section of building and was surrounded by a terrace like setting. Ultra 'Valnsee's Phantom was beginning to

take off from the rooftop as the troops it had left, quickly entered a doorway under the present hospital sign.

"Far Beyond Provocation, this is Ultra 'Valnsee. We are moving to secure the lobby and I have sent my Sangheili Rangers forward to deal with the Demon." The Ultra told K'an over headset. "Stand by until we need you."

"Understood" K'an replied. He rolled his eyes in annoyance behind the secrecy of the audio driven headset.

The Spirit shuttered and buckled slightly as K'an lowered the pace of the craft to a crawl. He then carefully maneuvered the craft towards the left in order to begin circling the building. The craft moved around the building and soon it was hovering along side of the skybridge that connected hospital to another closeby building. Through a virtual window on the Spirit's control display, K'an could look down the inside of the skybridge through the many external windows to see the hall within. He slowed the craft to a halt in order to monitor the hall.

"Ultra 'Valnsee, this is Far Beyond Provocation. I have a current view of what is going on the pathway to where the jammer is. I will keep you updated." K'an informed the Ultra of his new vantage point.

K'an watched as the several Sangheili Rangers that the Ultra had sent forth enter the hall. They stopped briefly for a moment to scan their immediate surrounding before they fanned out to move forward. They did not get far before K'an got a glimpse of an armored Human moving quickly towards their section of the hall. The grey armored Human quickly began to fire upon the group of Rangers.

"Ultra!" One of the Rangers yelled out through the headsets. "The Demon is here!" The group began to spread out using their thruster packs in order to try to take the Human off guard. Their tactic was unsuccessful however, in just under half a minute, the Human had dispatched them.

"Ultra, the Demon has slain the Rangers. He is going towards the lobby." K'an informed the Ultra as he watched the armored Human moving quickly out of the hallway going to the lobby.

"Far Beyond Provocation! Your clear for entry!" The Ultra began. "The Demon-" He screamed moments later but was cut off as his headset was disconnected.

K'an growled under his breath as he shoved the throttled ahead full. The Spirit lurched harshly as the warmed engines rang to life loudly. As fast as it would accelerate, he attempted to pilot the craft to the other side of the hospital in order to intercept the Human. The transport turned around the building fully as the a Human VTOL hastily was speeding off from the terrace.

"Command, the Demon has destroyed the communication jammer three."

"Understood, change course to jammer one. Proceed how you see fit from there." 'Sannwikhee reported.

"Very well." K'an grimaced. "Cinotee! Come here." K'an called loudly

Ryau hurried to the cockpit. "What is it K'an?" He asked.

"The plan has changed. The Demon got through the jammer." K'an paused to steer the craft around a building. "We need to think about how to go about this. I will not have us just running blindly into a building after the Human." K'an watched as the deep olive colored VTOL turned away from the direction of jammer one. "Do you still have a record of the city layout?" K'an questioned with a thought. "The one from when we were on the ground?"

"Sig had that." Ryau said. "But there are some Beam rifles in this Spirits field armory."

"I mean to ask how is your memory? Do you remember that Human tower? Sinoviet it was called?"

"Yes, the one with the big green arrow over there." Ryau pointed to the building.

"Very good." K'an admired the youth's memory. "I want you to play navigator. Find a building over looking the landing station of the jammer one building." K'an shuffled over slightly to give him room.

Ryau sat down at the navigator station instead. "There are plenty of buildings in the area, but they're too tall to see the landing pads."

"Find me one, Cinotee." K'an ordered.

"There's one." Ryau placed a waypoint on a building that was just tall enough to see into most of the club's landing deck."

"Thank you, Cinotee." K'an gave the Sangheili some praise as he turned sharply towards the waypoint.

K'an piloted the large craft through the dark city. The hard rain was not letting up and hard wind gushes shook the transport in between the buildings. Eventually the craft came upon the waypoint. K'an lowered the craft to the roof of the building at a safe height for exit.

"Cinotee, grab me one of those rifles and a viewing set." K'an barked. "Sig! You take the helm of the Spirit and remain nearby." K'an ordered. He followed Ryau out to one of the troop sections and began to open the side door as Ryau grabbed the supplies from the field armory. "Cinotee, your with me. Lets go!" K'an motioned out of the craft.

Sig took the controls of the transport as Ryau hopped out of the side of the Spirit first and K'an followed behind him. Once the pair were on the rooftop, they quickly made their way over to the roof's edge that overlooked the club. K'an looked back at the Spirit and watched the side hatch close. The Spirit rose slightly higher from the roof, began to move backwards from them, and then disappeared behind the other side of the building.

"Here we are. Good sight lines to the only way out." Ryau said as he looked over the edge of the roof.

"Yesâ€|" K'an agreed as he found where the landing pad for the jammer building was. "Now lets get set up."

With that, the two found a vantage point on the second of three levels of balconies and then began to piece together the proper assembly. Ryau set the viewing set down on the surface against the inner lip of the roof and K'an found a railing to properly rest the rifle upon. K'an knelt with the rifle and pressed the primer for the weapon located next to where his thumb rested on the handle. Weapon gave a quick whine as the bolt slowly traveled from the tip of the barrel back to the rotating plasma cylinder. The bolt then snapped forward back to the end of the barrel. A accenting strip of light purple illuminated along the length of the barrel.

"Have you ever used one of the viewing sets, before?" K'an asked Ryau.

"Yes I have." Ryau began to answer "But they're not commonly used since the Kigyar visors do it all at once. Sangheili sniper teams are rare on the battlefield." He admitted while turning the viewing scope in his hands.

"I agree. The Sangheili would rather be in the fray than to sit and wait." K'an sighed as he lowered himself to his belly. "That is one thing that I don't like about us as a species: There is a high percentile in the population that works in a one track system." Ryau soon joined him in prone.

"Could you explain?" Ryau asked as he put his face against the viewing scope.

"Oh, so you are willing to talk on such manners?"

"We touched on it beforeâ€|"

"I guess we did." K'an remembered. "What is your question then?"

"Explain what you meant just now."

"Wellâ€|" K'an started as he put his eye forward to the scope of the rifle. "I think it festers from the extreme religion that runs the entire Covenant. We as a race- oh. All of the races together are raised to follow and not to think.". He paused again to auger his cheek against the weapon.

"Possiblly, but there are always the ones that don't follow the flow." Ryau said. "Like you."

K'an hummed. "Maybe a part of it is that most of the military is made up of youthly individuals." K'an admitted. "It seems that the ones who are free thinkers have too high of power to be so. Some what dealing with heightened benefits. Do you think?"

"I think its the opposite of that, the free thinkers don't have any power to try and push some of the changes. Like what happened when Zelso changed some of the laws which in turn altered some



traditions." Ryau had recently finished reading the book of Zelso's history.

"Interestingâ€|" K'an thought on Ryau's input. "Then I now think it is a mix of both of our beliefs. It makes sense." K'an continued watching down the scope of the Rifle at the illuminated group of landing pads. "Apologies for talking so much on these social topics."

Ryau shifts suddenly as he seems to see something. "K'an, here he comes." He pointed over to an incoming Falcon.

"I see it." K'an acknowledged as he turned the barrel of the rifle along with the new found Falcon.

K'an traced the Falcon's smooth trajectory with the rifle. The two then watched the Falcon change pace as it began to lower to one of the helipads. As it did, the heavy caliber barrels on the front of the craft rained volleys of anti air rounds at the stationary plasma cannons set around the landing pads. The Falcon landed after it had successfully dispatched the cannons; the twin rotor craft barely had begun to stop before the armored Human climbed out. With a raised weapon the Human quickly made entrance the club's main door.

"That was him." K'an muttered. "We will wait for him to exit the building. I have a very well placed shot." K'an paused. "Is there an open comlink to the forces in that building?"

"No, it seems they've gone dark since he entered." Ryau said.

"I do not find myself surprised by this result." K'an grumbled lowly as he settled himself into the weapon so the sight was directly aimed at the height of a Human's head on the middle of the door. Moments later, Command notified all on the coms that the jammer had been destroyed. "He should be coming out soon. Pay attention, Ryau."

Several tense moments passed as the pair lay wait. K'an watched down the scope of the weapon at the door. Suddenly, both of their shields flared as rounds from several Human assault rifles hit the pair from behind. The two struggled to get up as fast as they could in the wave of Human's projectiles. Ryau was up before K'an got to his hooves. By the time he had gotten up, his shields were about to give. K'an quickly shoved Ryau towards the cover of the corner as he raised his Beam rifle towards the group of Humans who were advancing up the pathway. A quick loud crack rang out as he fired at one of the Humans, the lightened rail passed through the abdomen of one of the Humans. He fired another blind shot as his shields cracked as they failed and the weapon overheated; the seven Humans, as he had frantically counted as they stormed from an opening, continued to volley rounds at him. several rounds pinged off of K'an's armor.

"K'an!" Ryau called from the corner as he began to fire his needle rifle at the Humans.

K'an began to move as soon as Ryau pushed suppression fire at the group. However he was just about behind the corner when a well placed round of a Human DMR nearly went completely through his leg just below his upper right knee. K'an yelped out in pain as he collapsed

heavily to the floor. His hands were quick rendered empty as he writhed in pain and tried to comfort the now half limp leg. K'an swore in pain as he tried to slide himself behind the corner. Ryau leaned out from behind the corner and pulled K'an the rest of the way by his armor. K'an, through his gaping gasps of pain, called for Sig for immediate recovery.

"Ryau!" K'an blurted out "Get us some ground." K'an ordered as he struggled with the Type 25 pistol on his hip.

"Working on it." Ryau pulled K'an along the wall.

Ryau had no pulled K'an too far before one of the Humans attempted to round the corner. K'an sent several green bolts of plasma at the Human's torso. The Human fell back screaming as the plasma melted the chest plate. K'an held the hand weapon out straight and as steady as he could as Ryau continued to drag him backwards.

Suddenly, the loud whine of an Ion engine approached and was followed by a crash sound from the side of the building. A metal screeching sound rang out loudly and several Humans suddenly were thrown around the corner and over the ledge. Following them was the right front prong of the Spirit transport; Sig had scraped the walkway with the transport in order to void it of Humans. The Spirit moved to their side of the walkway and lowered itself to be even with said walkway. The troop hatch opened vertically for them to enter.

Ryau quickly did his best to carefully drag K'an onto the transport. As he was being dragged by Ryau, K'an watched around the corner for more Humans with the side arm raised. He figured due to the lack of advancing Humans must have meant that the scrape against the building was very effective. As the hatch closed, Ryau carefully positioned K'an in a crash harness towards the cockpit area.

"Get us out of here, Sig" Ryau called back and Sig quickly complied.

Soon the comms called out "All personnel are to evacuate the city. You have five minutes to vacate the area"

"You heard them, to the waypoint." Ryau checked to see how K'an was doing.

"Only five minutes?" K'an muttered as he cringed at his leg, his blood heavily trickled out of the entrance wound. "That isn't enough time to hardly get out of the city."

"Its plenty of time K'an." Ryau said. "Do you need me to stop the bleeding?"

"If you know how too" K'an cringed.

Ryau went to work and started to patch the wound with a gel healing pad.

"Ryau!" K'an started after Ryau was tending to the wound.

"What?" Ryau asked.

"May I purchase you a drink when we return to the ship?"

"Of course."

## 11. Act02 Ch05 Drive The Spade

**\*\*SGTLEGENDKILLED\*\***

**\*\*Fate Continuum**  
**><strong>Act II Chapter V**

"Drive the Spade"

H.D. August 23rd, 2552

The sound of beeping mechanics sounded softly in the faded distance. The faint glow of red bursts flashed through the surrounding dark cabin. The foul stench of aged flesh lingered heavily in the misshapen metal box that remained of the troop bay of the Phantom. Several bodies could be outlined in between the dim flashes of the pulsing warning lights. Only two forms had been left intact, two Sangheili.

"By the gods! D'rok..." A raspy voice started softly; the speech was interrupted by a brief fit of dry coughing. "Please do not be rendered expired. You still breathe..." The blurred figure in front of D'rok slowly began clearing as it spoke. "D'rok!" The figure shouted again as it shook him.

"... Yes... I'm alive, give me a moment." D'rok grumbled. His vision slowly returning. Soon the figure was clear to him: an aged Sangheili in Ultra armor; Grek'la.

"Thank the gods!" Grek'la exclaimed brightly as he watched D'rok closely. "I thought I was the only one left living after the craft failed."

"What happened, exactly?" D'rok asked softly with a groan as he strained a little.

"The craft was heavily damaged by Human ground to air munitions. You would have fallen out of the side hatch if I had not secured you in this harness" He explained.

"Flak..." D'rok muttered.

"Yes, yes it was. Again, thank the gods for these harnesses."

"Yes..." D'rok sighed. "Could you get me out of this thing?" D'rok asked after a quietly awkward moment.

"Oh... Y-yes of course! How foolish of me." Grek'la realized.

Grek'la quickly began to undo the harness that held D'rok against the cabin side. He seemed to be having a few issues with it as the detaching match was broken or stuck. With just a few frustratingly slow moments the hatch gave and the harness swung up towards the ceiling. D'rok held the harness to as he moved his hanging hooves to

a safe footing on the tilted floor. He nearly slipped as he let go; he was still quite disoriented.

"Steady, Tallaham... The craft is not upright."

"Thank you for the kind advisory. I hadn't quite noticed that yet." D'rok shot back smartly.

"The left side hatches seem to be buried into the dirt. We clearly have no form of exit there..." Grek'la paused. "And the other is damaged. It seems to be stuck in position."

D'rok paused a moment, looking around at the masses of dead in the craft. "Can the door be pried by the hands of two?"

"I do not believe so." Grek'la answered as he looked down from the hatch. "What is worse is that communications with orbit are not working for whatever reason. There is simply no connectivity here"

D'rok gave a sigh as he looked down, rubbing his aching eyes. After the ache had passed, he looked upwards towards the side hatch of the craft. The door was mangled shut. Dents and abrasions could be seen from even the inside. A few small spots of light could be seen through some punctures and cracks in the seams of the metal.

"We are trapped here" Grek'la sighed.

"Stay calm, Grek'la" D'rok sighed and looked down.

"I am trying, D'rok. We have been trapped in here for multiple days. I can hardly stand the stench and we are out of viable replenishments."

D'rok seemed to ignore him.

"You have been unconscious for these long daysâ€¦ so that helps not my mental state."

"Grek'la. I need you to move yourself towards the front of the craft." He said suddenly.

"Why? Why the strange request at such a time?" Grek'la questioned.

"I am improvising" D'rok answered as he lifted a Type-50 Concussion Rifle from a deceased Ultra on the metal floor.

Grek'la moved away from D'rok and D'rok moved back to the side opposite of the stuck hatch. With his back against the wall, D'rok aimed the weapon at the hatch from the hip. He placed a firm hand on the top of the barrel and drew a breath. He then pressed the trigger pad multiple times. The weapon kicked hard as multiple blasts were thrown from the weapon in a matter of seconds. D'rok strained downward on the top of the weapon in order to control the climb of the barrel. Each of the six large rounds hit in a small area. The combined forces of all of the blasts were enough to punch a hole in the side of the craft large enough to fit a Mgalekgolo. Bright rays of light shined down into the craft, blinding their deprived eyes. The smoke cleared as the two stood in a brief quiet

state.

"Interesting method of creating an exit." Grek'la admired and face palmed in the fact he had not thought of this.

"Enough praising. Let us get out of here." D'rok sighed as he dropped the Type - 50 to the floor. "Gather your weapons, Grek'la" D'rok spoke as he collected his Type - 51M Carbine.

D'rok held the carbine raised to shoulder level; the barrel locked towards the now opened hatch. He then cautiously began to move up the tilted craft to the exit, occasionally stepping over a body or limb. Once he reached the opening, D'rok propped himself on the edge of the hatchway and scanned the surrounding area with his weapon. There was no one around the craft as it would seem; the only sounds that could be heard were the environment and a very distant rumble of aircraft. D'rok quickly surveyed the area around the craft as he stood on one of the purpled colored arches shaped into the hull.

The craft had scrapped itself into a large field that appeared to have been loosely used for farming as the field has small rows of dirt sculpted for irrigation by whoever was preparing the land for seeding. Beyond the field, dense forestry created a flat edge in the large rectangular area that was cleared for the farming. To the north there was a mountain range that towered over the forest. To the west the mountain range continued on and wrapped around the land, creating a sort of valley, and to the east was flat land. D'rok looked down closer to the side of the craft to see a two seat Human vehicle.

"Grek'laâ€¦ Is there a Fuel Rod cannon you can acquire from in there?" D'rok yelled back into the hatch opening.

After a few moments Grek'la called back with a "Yes."

"Bring that with you and gather as much munitions you can find. We may need it." D'rok looked back to the vehicle before dropping from the side of the craft.

The wheeled vehicle, being Human in origin, sat dirty and mud covered on a dirt road carved into the field. With a quick inspection there was no Human opposition anywhere in sight. D'rok turned back to the downed craft to inspect the large scar that it had scraped into the ground. He quietly wondered if they had just ruined someone's picnic. Shaking his head he turned back to the vehicle to further inspect it.

The vehicle would be classed as a truck in terms that it was nearly the size of a Warthog and that it had a flatbed behind the orange colored cab. On the rear of the civilian vehicle was a badge reading 'TurboGen Racing' with 'Spade' and 'Independent | WD' beneath it. Along the driver side there rested a badge labeled 'TurboGen M96 Methane Compound Energy.'. This implied that the vehicle operated on methane instead of the Human usual of hydrogen. On the leather steering wheel was the silver logo of the a Ram of some kind and between the two seats rested the stick of the short shift; besides the third pedal for a clutch, the vehicle clearly had a manual transmission.

After fumbling with a lever under the driver's seat, D'rok managed to

slide the seat back as far as it would go. He places his Carbine between the seats and slid himself carefully into the seat. The space in the cabin was a bit tight against his shoulders but his legs could be positioned tight around the front edge of the seat to rest somewhat comfortably in the space provided. He looked back towards the craft to watch Grek'la approaching with an armful of fuel rod munitions; the weapon was clipped to his back along with his Plasma Rifle clipped to his hip.

"Are you sure about this, D'rok?" Grek'la questioned as he placed the Fuel rod gun and it's munitions on the dash of the vehicle. "Use of Human vehicles could be considered treasonous."

D'rok matched him with a face that would summarize an 'Are you joking?' equivalence.

"Waitâ€¦ forget that." Grek'la climbed into the passenger seat. "I've read some of your file after we became acquainted in the armory on the ship. You are not above this." He took the Fuel Rod gun from the dash and held it on his lap.

"Do you think you can navigate us to the Human city?" D'rok asked.

"I can if you can operate this vehicle." He said as he pulled out a datapad from his side.

"This is nothingâ€¦" D'rok reached for the key and turned the vehicle on. The engine gave a whine and a decreasing rumble as the methane engine turned over into life. The engine rumbled down to a idle quickly after it's ignition. "Have you got a destination point yet?"

"It isâ€¦" Grek'la paused "Right here." he tapped the screen. "I have uploaded it into our ACIs. Do you need anything else?"

"No. Hang on." D'rok placed his large hand over the shifter on the center console and with his thumb over the gear release button and his hoof down on the clutch pedal, he fluttered the accelerator slightly before he shoved the shifter into first gear.

The Spade's deep tread tires spun in the dirt as it lurched from where it had rested. As much spinning that was taking place between the rubber and the ground, the vehicle seemed quite responsive. D'rok turned the vehicle towards the nearest tree line of the field. As they got closer to the treeline the soft pathway they were on intersected a trail that lay along side of the trees. He slide the Spade into a leftward powerslide and headed westbound onto the trail. D'rok only let off the pedal to shift into a higher gear as the vehicle buckled around due to the unevenness of the trail.

"In a hurry are we?" Grek'la sputtered out as he clung to the side handle of the vehicle.

"The longer that you are around downed craft in hostile territory the worse of a situation you build for yourself. If we can get some distance from the crash and maybe find some smaller trails we can travel mostly undetected." D'rok answered as he checked quickly in the rearview at the distancing wreckage that could hardly be seen in the large dust trail the vehicle was leaving.

"You really think so?"

"I know so."

Grek'la stared at D'rok in silent disbelief.

The trail continued on for the entire length of the field. D'rok kept the Spade at a moderate speed to avoid losing control on the somewhat jarring trail. Several times he left the trail to dodge around a fallen tree or the occasional set of farming equipment that lay stationary on the trail. Soon the corner of the field was reached and the trail lead off on a quick venture through the trees. The trail continued off for a little longer before opening up into another clearing. In this clearing was an ever convenient paved road that continued on in their direction. The Spade slid through the grass and bounded furiously towards the roadway. Once the tires made contact with pavement, D'rok shoved the accelerator down. This caused the rear tires to screech for traction as the vehicle swayed from the changing momentum. He watched the tachometer rise into red before power shifting into the next gear.

"Can you not try to kill us?!" Grek'la growled, clearly not being one for the quick pace of motor sports.

"Silence yourself and keep us on track, Grek'la!" D'rok yelled back over the bellowing engine.

Grek'la pulled out his datapad once again now that the ride was not so bumpy and checked their position. D'rok continued on flying through the gears as the truck easily passed 100 miles per hour. The road was not very winding and was fairly unbending in it's direction. Soon the vehicle flew by a road sign listing New Alexandria being approximately 125km from their current point. With their bearings set and with them being on the right path, they pressed on hard down the road. The road continued on for several long miles without any sign of Human activity.

"D'rok! Do you see that?" Grek'la suddenly pointed to a group of Human Falcons flying at an angle to the road they were on ahead.

"Yes. Where does this road lead!?"

"This road is leading to themâ€¦ Not surprising really." Grek'la looked down at his datapad. There is a side trail that courses up the side of the mountain that we should traverseâ€¦ However, the entrance is several kilometers down an upcoming highway.

"We are going to have to take it." D'rok tightened his grip on the wheel in preparation on what lay ahead.

To their misfortune, their road soon dumped onto a multi lane highway. The Spade heavily swayed onto the city bound side of the highway and the two quickly realised that the opposite side of the highway was jammed packed by a slowly moving stream of civilian vehicles; they had just turned onto a major evacuation route from New Alexandria.

"This is not goodâ€¦" D'rok growled.

"What are we going to do?!" Grek'la sounded slightly panicked.

"Ready the Fuel Rod but do not fire on the civilians. That will only guarantee attention."

"Understoodâ€|" Grek'la fumbled with the cannon.

"Hang on" D'rok tromped the gas to the floor as he downshifted to pick up the pace.

D'rok continued racing on, the Spade picking up speed quickly as he shifted through the gears. The highway was wide open on their side and he figured that maybe if he kept the truck up to speed they might not be as noticeable to the near standstill civilians. And so he continued on, the truck hard charging faster and faster. The racing machine seemed the most comfortable between 165 and 170 mph and this is where D'rok held the speed.

They raced on furiously, blazing passed countless cars on the other side. The highway had begun to ascend and descend with several foothills of the mountain. Eventually they came over the peak of an incline to be faced with a sudden UNSC checkpoint ahead of them. The checkpoint seemed to have been quickly set up to try to deter anyone heading towards the city and to clear military vehicles ahead. Due to the Spade's speed, there was no point in slowing down. With this realization, D'rok simply drove straight through the thin metal draw pole of the checkpoint. The pole was no match for the truck's mass and it simply was ripped from its rotating arm and thrown through the air off towards the other side of the highway. D'rok ignored all of this and pressed on, most likely leaving many confused and surprised Humans at the checkpoint behind.

The two raced on. Grek'la seemed quite upset at the checkpoint incident. He calmed down soon after and figured that they had only have of the original distance to get to their destination. He began to look around the cabin at the interior design. He played with the console buttons to keep himself occupied or something similar to that notion. D'rok ignored him for the most part as it did not really bother him that the air conditioner and heating vents in the cabin were being turned on and off at random intervals.

"For a Human vehicleâ€| the cabin design is nice." Grek'la admitted.

"Yep" D'rok answered while concentrating on the road.

"I wonder what this does..." Grek'la pushed a button on the higher part of the dash.

The speakers of the Spade gave a soft crackle before a moment of silence. A few moments later the sounds of the beginning riff from Motorhead's Ace of Spades began to play out. This new sound greatly startled them. As the song played on, Grek'la didn't seem to know how to handle it, his face expressed mass confusion. D'rok glanced up to the sun visor to just notice a bundle of hardcased envelopes; the one in front read: Music Archives presents: Metal Massacre: Motorhead 1975-2025. D'rok grinned slightly. He had not noticed before somehow, and he vaguely remembered the song, but he remembered it



enough to appreciate.

"Whatâ€¦. what is this?" Grek'la asked dumbfounded.

"I do believe it is Human music."

"I did not know they had other than the electronic stuff that I have heard from time to time." Grek'la looked perplexed.

"...intriguing"

"Where is that trail we need to get off on?" D'rok changed the subject.

"It is a few kilometers away." Grek'la checked again.

"Good, keep an eye out for it. As soon as we can get off of this highway the be-" D'rok was suddenly cut off mid sentence as a group of Warthogs merged onto the highway in front of them.

D'rok slammed on the brakes and the Spade's tires screeched in vain to slow the vehicle's mass down. The Warthogs merging managed to break their line formation to take up most of the highway. The speed at which the pack was moving was easily half of the speed that the Spade was driving; D'rok, in fact, nearly plowed into the rear end of one. The Spade finally matched the packs speed after almost rear ending them. D'rok gave a furious huff and slammed the accelerator down as he downshifted. The Spade's engine roared and quickly rocketed forward. He swiftly darted between two of the Warthogs and blasted by them. D'rok just so happen to quickly glance over at the Warthog and accidentally meet the gaze of the Human driver. The Spade overtook the pack with ease and left them receding in the rearview mirrors; one of the Warthog seem to a a swerving fit from the shock of the sight of two Sangheili operating a Human vehicle. It would not have mattered if the pack were to pursue the two Sangheili as the Warthogs could not nearly travel at the speed the Spade could.

The Spade roared on for a little while until Grek'la informed him of the upcoming trail. D'rok slowed down and quickly left the highway to turn down a dirt trail that seemed to head off towards the side of the mountain. The Spade lost a great deal of speed as the ride became bumpy once again. The spade jerked as it buckled over some ruts on the side of the trail. This trail path was a lot more rough in terms of terrain. Despite this, the truck had no issues plowing through the rough, uphill trail for many kilometers. Soon the trail would reveal an opening in the forest. Grek'la asked D'rok to stop and so they slid to a halt.

"I will be right back, D'rok." Grek'la made his way from D'rok to the treeline for a little bit of privacy.

As Grek'la stepped away, D'rok noticed that there was now a sliver of connectivity to the fleet in orbit; They must have only been clocked into the city for this invasion. He stepped out of the Spade and stood in the nearest location that had no overhead obstruction.

"This is Special Operations Officer D'rok Tallaham. I am hailing any listening dispatch." D'rok spoke looking up with his finger on the earpiece.

"Tallaham?" A voice came through with a slight crackle of interference. "We have you listed as deceased."

"That is clearly negative, command. There were two survivors of the crash: Ultra Yauniktee and Myself." D'rok sighed at remembering how little the Covenant did for rescuing crashed transports.

"Understood, what is your current location?" The voice asked.

"We are approximately 50 km from the Human city on the slope of the neighboring mountain." D'rok answered as he looked down at Grek'la's datapad.

"Are you requesting extraction?"

"Yes." D'rok answered frankly.

"Stand by..." There was a brief silence on the comm piece. "Officer Tallaham, we are unable to allocate extraction craft to your location. I would recommend that you continue heading towards the city and support invasion group 66. They have been grounded closer to the city and are going to receive extraction within the hour."

"Very well. Thank you." D'rok spoke and looked to Grek'la as he returned from his business.

"Acknowledged. I am sending you their coordinates and I will tell them to wait for you." The comms fell quiet.

"What are the plans now?" Grek'la asked.

"Get back in the vehicle. We have to hurry to the city and join an invasion group for pick up." D'rok explained as he quickly slid into the drive seat again.

"Very well!" Grek'la answered enthusiastically as he hopping into the passenger seat.

D'rok once again started the engine of the Spade and took off further down the trail. They blazed the path for many kilometers until they reached a small paved road that ran alongside the curving slope of the mountain. The road, despite its somewhat treacherous bends, hardly changed in elevation for the entirety of the road. Soon the road lead along side into the outskirts of the city. The two looked to the left of the road occasionally to see what was going on down on the streets just below the road level. There was mostly evacuation happening, with the occasional firefight between the invading Covenant forces and the UNSC battalions or City law enforcement on the streets.

"Invasion group 66, this is Special Operations Officer Tallaham. We are drawing close to your position. What is your status currently?" D'rok asked loudly over the accelerating engine of the Spade.

"Thank the Gods!" A stressed sounding Sangheili answered him. "We are deep in a not so gracious situation right now, sir!"

"What is happening?" D'rok shifted gears and cutting close to the inner edge of a bend.

"We are stuck down in a garden plaza. The Humans are giving quite the fight to us." The Sangheili panted "Gods! They have a Tank!" He shouted.

"Very well. Stay calm and collected. Conserve yourselves and only fire in the times between the tank rounds." D'rok instructed quickly.

"Sir?! Do you have any heavy ordinance?"

D'rok looked over at Grek'la, who was already, as he was hearing the conversation, readying the Fuel Rod gun. "Yes we do. Hang tight youth, We are but a few minutes out."

"We will try!" The Sangheili ended his end of the comms as he was shouting about Humans to his left.

D'rok hurried along the road as fast as he could without losing control of the vehicle. He could speed up a little as the road straightened out a bit as it went further along the city. They began to get very close to the group's location and D'rok noticed a larger plantation covered courtyard downhill from the road. It was very visible as there was no buildings between the road and it. In the courtyard was a smoking Phantom. It looked mainly intact except for a hole that had been punched straight through in the hull. Around it was a decent size group of Covenant forces locked in a firefight between a few Humans and a Scorpion Tank that sat firing occasionally from a street along the courtyard as a group of infantry moved slowly up on the invasion group. D'rok quickly slowed the Spade to a halt behind some convenient shrubs.

"Oh that is interesting" Grek'la commented as he looked at the group's situation. "How are we going to get down there with that tank?"

D'rok thought for a moment. "Here is what we are going to do. We are going to whip around onto the street behind the Humans and then we will position ourselves behind the tank and fire into its rear." D'rok looked down at the center console to locate the Spade's e-brake.

"That sounds quite senseless" Grek'la scoffed.

"You have not known me for long enough!" D'rok grimly said as he shoved the shifter into reverse and shoved the accelerator down.

The Spade's tires screeched as the vehicle lurched backwards steadily. As soon as the truck had gained significant speed he quickly turned the wheels to the left hard in order to rotate the truck around. The sheer momentum and weight of the truck caused the front wheels to lose traction, allowing the truck to whip completely around in a 180 degree turn. D'rok had shifted into first gear mid turn and had the accelerator already against the floor again. The truck shifted on hard, using the momentum built up by reversing in the direction that it was now headed.

"Hold on!" D'rok shouted as he suddenly jerked the steering wheel to the right.

The Truck leaned against the sudden turn as it crashed through the wooden fence that lined the side of the road. The Spade left the ground and sailed through the air with the splintered fence for several seconds before shaking from a slamming return to the slope down towards the streets below. D'rok let off the gas and fluttered with the pedals, making many quick movements with the steering wheel to make sure that the Spade stayed on the right path without sliding too much at such a descent. The Spade quickly slid down onto the street after leaving a small elevated edge of the hill that had been made a slight wall on the end of the street.

Sparks were thrown out from under the Spade as the heavy vehicle landed fiercely onto the pavement. The engine gave a loud roar as D'rok downshifted and stamped the accelerator down to the floorboard. The tires emitted squeals as the rubber struggled for traction on the road surface. The two were shoved hard into the seat as the Spade quickly gained speed down the street. D'rok watched the side streets towards the courtyard as he passed a burning car wreck on the side of the road; watching to see when to turn so they could surprise the tank. After passing several cross streets, he decided that an upcoming alleyway was the best bet.

D'rok slowed the Spade down and pulled up on the emergency brake, causing the rear wheels to lock in place. As the Spade got closer to the alley he turned the wheel so that the rear of the truck slid around into a controlled drift. D'rok eased the slowing turn as he let go of the e-brake into the alley well enough there was but little correction to be made to allow passage through the alley. When the Spade bursted out of the other side of the alley, they were between the group of Humans and their tank; the infantry was to the right, the tank was left. The Humans were seemingly too busy to notice the vehicle entering the area.

D'rok slid the Spade to the left and charged the tank's front. At first the driver of the tank had not suspected anything of the newly appeared Spade. This changed as soon as he noticed that two Sangheili were driving the vehicle, one of which was holding a Fuel Rod gun. The tank driver began to reverse the tank as he attempted to aim the barrel to the cannon at the Spade. This was all in vain as the truck easily outmaneuvered the tank's aim and maneuverability as it charged passed the side of the tank. D'rok turned and pulled the ebrake onces again. The Spade slide around hard passed the rear corner of the tank until it stopped with Grek'la's side facing the rear grate of the tank's engine.

"Hit it!" D'rok shouted at Grek'la.

Grek'la took aim and fired the Fuel Rod as fast his shoulder could handle. Due to the closing range of the reversing tank, the gun's accuracy mattered less than it normally would. Shell after swift shell was at the rear of the tank; each radioactive projectile violently exploding in a flash of green against the rear of the tank. D'rok had began to reverse as the tank's mass grew closer. The driver of the tank desperately tried to turn the tank and its gun around to face them. His time had run out suddenly as the tank violently exploded from the repeated explosive impacts of Fuel Rods.

With the tank now destroyed and enflamed, Grek'la slid a fresh rack of Fuel Rods into the launcher. D'rok maneuvered to a stop to allow the still rolling tank to roll right passed them. As soon as the tank

had passed, he shifted into first and accelerated towards the infantry who were caught in confusion during their intense firefight. A few had turned to fire at the now approaching vehicle, several of the bullets bounded off of the hood and bumper of the charging Spade. Grek'la fired off a few Fuel Rods at the infantry, managing to decimate several Humans in the process. D'rok let off of the accelerator and let go of the shifter to grab his assault carbine from between the seats. With his left hand still on the steering wheel, D'rok drove the front of the Spade at a Human next to a cement divider. The truck smashed flat into the cement divider, instantly dismembering the Human Trooper between the bumper at obstacle.

After dealing with the recoil of the crash, D'rok and Grek'la bailed out of the Spade for cover. As they separately moved quickly for cover, several Human rounds struck their shields, flashing brightly as they had already been half depleted from the crash. As D'rok had moved he had counted around 12 remaining Troopers mixed within the cars and other road obstacles scattered through the streets. D'rok lowered himself slightly in stance as he shouldered his carbine and pulled the trigger. The dual side by side barrels flared brightly as the automatic carbine sent multiple rounds at a pair of Humans in the middle of the grouping. He fired in bursts rapidly as he switched from a few targets before getting volleyed by Human fire. D'rok ducked himself against an elevated flowerbed and put his finger to his comm set.

"Invasion group 66!" He shouted.

"What sir!?" The same young Sangheili answered.

"We are going to draw their attention from you. As soon as they face us I want you to cover them with every weapon you have! Understood!?" D'rok looked towards Grek'la who was watching him from the other side of the street.

"Understood, Sir!" The Sangheili then shouted at the remaining survivors of the group.

"Ready?!" D'rok yelled at Grek'la and received a quick thumbs up as Grek'la replaced the Fuel Rod with a Plasma Rifle from his hip. "Go!"

D'rok turned himself slightly towards the Humans. He leveled his carbine around the corner of the flowerbed and held the trigger in order to blind fire. He looked over occasionally to judge where his shots were going and to see if he was hitting any. Grek'la was doing very similar with his left arm extended around his cover, his plasma rifle sending a spread of bright blue plasma at the Humans. Most of Troopers, now receiving fire from another location, scrambled to adjust their cover. This proved bad for most of them as the invasion group snapped themselves up and sprayed the entire area down with everything from turret fire to plasma pistol bolts. Between the crossbound slaughter on two sides, the group of Trooper group quickly fell to the Covenant weapons.

D'rok slipped back behind the flowerbed and ejected his two pop magazine to replace them. As he shoved the replacement in he stood with the carbine shouldered. Quickly he moved forward to better check the area. The Troopers were all gone but the sounds of more were coming from where Grek'la and he came from.

"Grek'la! Hurry to the Phantom group. More Humans are inbound!" D'rok yelled at him.

Grek'la picked up the Fuel Rod gun and jogged for the group. D'rok turned back towards the Human sounds as he back stepped towards the group as he tried to listen for what was coming. He heard no tank tracks, which was a great thing, however he heard several inbound Warthogs. D'rok turned and sprinted for the group. He got to them quickly, sliding himself over a cement block, as several rounds from an arriving Warthog grazed around him. He dropped himself next to a Sangheili Major that was using the cement block as cover.

"Sir! Thank you for your arrival!" A Sangheili Major, being the one who spoke to him on the comms, greeted him excitedly.

"Yes, you are welcome! Now keep your head down and give me link and control to your group comms!" D'rok commanded.

"Y..yes sir!" The major stuttered, not expecting a command. He gave some commands to his ACI and did as D'rok asked.

"Thank you, Major." D'rok looked at his ACI as the roster loaded: four Sangheili, three Kig'Yar, and seven Unggoy. Not bad for a group that had been holding out for over at least an hour as it seemed.

"What are we going to do about the Humans!?" The Major asked frantically as several bullets sailed past his helmet.

"Give me a moment." D'rok looked around quickly at the group before spotting a Needle Rifle wielding Kig 'Yar. "Kig 'Yar!" He yell to him, getting his attention. "Send some shots at their vehicles on my command!" The Kig 'Yar gave a nod and waited for an opening. "Anyone with Type 31s pay attention. When the Humans adjust themselves to fire upon the Kig 'Yar, I want you to peg the Humans on the turrets. Understood?!" D'rok spoke quickly but clearly. He knew that the group could be fairly efficient with swift leadership.

His comm piece lit up with several 'Yes sir's.

"Whenever you are ready, sniper!" D'rok motioned at the waiting Kig 'Yar.

The Kig 'Yar waited a brief moment before raising the barrel of his weapon just over his cover. He fired a few paced out shots at the Human vehicles, one of which had taken out the driver of one through a windsheild. His cover was quickly sprayed with the AA rounds of the Warthogs and had no time to get back into cover. The large rounds quickly cut the Kig 'Yar to the ground as a lifeless corpse. D'rok yelled as they began to fire at the Kig 'Yar for the rest to move now. He and several others turned to aim around their cover to fire at the Troopers on the Warthogs. The accurate Needle Rifles made short work of the Troopers and soon the Warthogs were no longer operated. A large gathering of Human infantry had began to come to the street near the burning tank wreck now sat. D'rok popped a few bursted shots at the advancing Troopers, forcing them to duck down behind the burning tank for cover.

"Keep them back! Make sure they stay as far back as we can keep

them!" D'rok yelled to the group as he watched down the barrels of his carbine.

The Humans tried to take shots at back at them but were mainly unsuccessful. D'rok held a close watch on them with another nearby Sangheili who had a Plasma Repeater. The Major next to him was clearly shaken up from the situation. D'rok looked to see how the rest were doing; the Unggoy were tucked tightly against their cover and the Kig 'Yar were exchanging concerns about the fallen sniper in their own language. Grek'la was helping the two other Sangheili with a mobile plasma battery from the Phantom.

"Somebody please go grab that Beam Rifle and put it to good use!" D'rok knelt down and looked at the shaken Major. "You are doing good, youth. Do not worry about any losses you have received."

"People have perished!" The Major whimpered.

"I know how many have you lost?"

"Five five, sir." He answered softly.

"Five and there is 15 including us? That is a decent return rate for a young Major." D'rok tried to give him some praise. "It is hard to deal with, but for right now focus. You can mourn on the Phantom when it gets here."

"Alright yes." The Major seemed to perk up. "How long until the Phantom arrives?"

"I would give it a few minutes. They should be here soon. We just need to keep the Humans back, alright?"

"Yes sir" The Major answered confidently, probably as he felt a ton of stress off of his shoulders with the new leadership.

D'rok watched out back to the Human's location with the rest of the group. The Humans tried several time to take shots back at them. They also had tried to take another street into the courtyard; that was not successful either as D'rok kept the group tightly locked down at informed. Soon a Phantom lowered itself down from the sky and hailed for the group to mark a place for them to drop their grav lift. D'rok marked a position right behind the group's position. As soon as the grav lift was opened, D'rok commanded the Unggoy to go first, followed by the Kig 'Yar, and the finally the rest of the Sangheili. He kept a careful watch as he moved into the grav lift; he was the last to get into the Phantom.

Once he was inside of the Phantom he yelled up to the pilots that everyone was onboard. With a slight buckle, the Phantom began to move forward as it began the ascend towards orbit from the city. D'rok sat heavily against one of the seats in the side of the troop carriage in the Phantom and waited as he watched the relieved group that had just been picked up. Of the group to approach him, the Major left the group and walked over to where D'rok was seated.

"I am sorry for locking up down there, sir." The major apologized quietly.

"Don't worry about it. We all have to learn at some point." D'rok

smiled.

"You were right down there. About the focusing."

"Yeah. If you lose your senses then more losses will happen."

"Yes. Thank you, sir."

"Now run alongâ€¦ You have a squad to talk toâ€¦ You should praise them for giving such a quality performance. Then remember your losses." D'rok instructed quietly to him.

"That is a good idea. Thank you again, sir!" The young Major beamed.

"D'rok Tallaham." D'rok extended his hand in greeting. "Special Operations Officerâ€¦"

"You saved us down there, sir. I shall not forget you." The Major shook D'rok's hand.

"If you ever need assistance feel free to get hail for me." D'rok smiled.

The Major nodded and returned to his group. D'rok watched as the Major began to go into a speech to them.

"You are good with the youths" Grek'la commented as he sat next to D'rok, Fuel Rod still in hand.

"I always have beenâ€¦ I am just good with people." D'rok shrugged.

"Good with people both friendly and hostile ways?" Grek'la chuckled.

"I guess you are right." D'rok gave a slight smile.

"Do you have any children?"

"Noâ€¦ Not yet. I am to marry in the near future. My mistress is on the ship." D'rok admitted.

"Are you two from the north? Shall you keep your offsprings or take on others like the rest of Sangheilios?" Grek'la asked while referencing how most Sangheili are raised by their uncles.

"We are to raise our own. I would raise others if asked to. I do enjoy children." D'rok admitted.

"Either way, I think it would not matter. You will be a good upbringing for any child." Grek'la smiled

"Thank you, Grek'la."

"Just do me one thing, D'rok."

"Hmm?"

"I desire a wedding invitation."



"Very well." D'rok gave a chuckle. "Let's just get back to the ship first."

"Yesâ€¦ I shall buy you several rounds of only the finest Sangheili ale!" Grek'la expressed happily.

D'rok shook his head; this return was going to be interesting.

## 12. Act02 Ch06 Until Death

**\*\*SGTLEGENDKILLED\*\***

>Fate Continuum<br>Act II Chapter VI

"Until Deathâ€¦"

H.C.D. August 23, 2552

"Could you please explain why, 'Sannwikhee?" D'rok asked his previous mission handler firmly.

"I do not know, sir. I assume that why we lost connection to your vital systems is due to the fact that there was so much flak, debris, and particles above the city." The small Sangheili operative officer admitted. "It probably also didn't help that the invasion was sloppy."

"Wellâ€¦ just make sure that I'm brought back to the living in the records, please." D'rok chuckled.

"Will do sir!" The young Sangheili exclaimed happily.

"Where is the rest of my team now?"

"They just returned back from the surface. One injury; Major Retmaree."

D'rok hummed. "Which medical bay?" D'rok asked, knowing full well K'an would never leave anything listed as an injury unless it was serious.

"Bay 42" He paused, scrolling through his screen. "Should be bed 27."

"Thank you. I will head there then."

"Of course, your welcome, sir." Sanwichie waved. "It was a pleasure meeting you in person."

"Likewise." D'rok turned and left the operation bridge and made his way onto the elevator that would take him to the lower levels of the ship.

With a sigh, he watched the elevator doors close, leaving him in the metal cylinder alone. His mandibles stretched widely in a deeply drawn yawn. He had barely been on the ship for a few hours, most of which were spend with his higher-ups receiving their 'welcome back's in between their telling of what had transpired. After he had been caught up, he immediately had went to his previous operation dispatch

to find where his team, or whatever was left of them, was located. Once he made his way passed the many patrons who greeted him along the way to the infirmary, he checked in quickly before heading straight to the bed that K'an was in. Too much his luck, the entire group with the exception of Naki were all present.

"How did the ground operation go without me? D`rok asked as he stood at the end of K'an's bed. "And what happened to K'an?"

Ryau, being the only one to immediately notice D'rok's entrance, snapped a slightly panicked glance at him. "Well..." He paused for a moment to swallow at the fact he was talking to a 'dead' man. "It was not that bad. Considering that we all thought you were dead. K'an threw a Major named Sremm off an overpass." D'rok smiled instantly at this. "But K'an got shot in the leg just a hour ago on a rooftop."

"Huh... Sremm was on this op? And he pissed off K'an to the point of friendly fire? Absolutely glorious!" D'rok chuckled.

"We picked him and a few others up at a crash site. Unfortunately, Sremm was the only one that we know survived. Wellâ€¦ he was alive after he hit the ground." Ryau said. "I hope Rtik got out." Ryau trailed off on the last part of that as he looked down with a shameful face

Drok sighed just before Sig finally noticed that D'rok had shown up. "D`rok!" Sig nearly yelled in excitement.

"Hello sig!" D'rok smiled as Sig came over and hugged him.

Sig said nothing as he made the situation slightly awkward.

"You... going to be ok, Sig?" D'rok asked concerned.

"Yeah... Sorryâ€¦" Sig pulled away with a hint of shamefulness for his outburst.

D'rok gave a quick wave to Sig to let him know not to worry much about it before looking over to a bedridden K'an. His left had been heavily bandaged with gel pads and such from a gunshot wound that seemed to clear through the bone of his mid leg. It was a decent sized wound too. D'rok figured from the size and apparent damage he had heard of it was probably one hell of a round too. A good match would have been the Human M392 DMR. Currently, however, he seemed to be toying with one of the female clinic nurses.

"K'an got hit..." Sig informed D'rok softly from his side.

"I can see that."

"Awwâ€¦ Come close, miss. I have something for you." K'an smiled as he cooed to the nurse from the bed.

The nurse gave an uncertain look to him before she slowly eased herself close to him. K'an, playing it smooth as he faked a whisper, slyly took her by a finger under her jawline and plunged his mouth against her into a deep kiss. The nurse got started for a moment but gave no fight; K'an knew his game well. After a moment of kissing, she pulled back and gave him an embarrassed glare.

"After these bums leave you can return hereâ€|" He spoke smoothly with a grin. "There is much more where that comes from."

The nurse gave a deep huff and left the room very flustered. K'an trailed her with his eyes until his gaze moved onto D'rok. As he saw D'rok, his pleased emotions fell like a brick as his eyes grew in confusion.

"How?!" He screamed nearly at the top of his lungs. "How do you fucking do that?!" He yelled out frantically before looking at Ryau. "Hâ€|whoâ€|. How?!" He asked as his arms flailed in example towards D'rok's general direction.

Ryau simply shrugged as D'rok shook his head.

"I...I can't take this..." K'an grunted as he rubbed his face dramatically. "I don't like ghostsâ€|" He then dropped his hands heavily on his lap. "Ok. What happened?" He asked, wanting to get the awkward stuff over.

D'rok sighed. "Basically my phantom got hit, got redirected, and we crashed on the other side of the mountain. Only an Ultra and I survived" He explained.

"You were that close to us?" K'an raised an eyebrow.

"I guessâ€|" D'rok shrugged.

K'an, with the grace and attention span of a child, looked past D'rok suddenly at Naki who had arrived just before D'rok gave his explanation. "Hey beautiful." He smiled.

"Shut up, K'an." Naki immediately shot back fiercely.

D'rok sighed heavily as he held his hand out to restrain Ryau from killing K'an.

"Aww, that is harsh... What did I do wrong, my sweet doctor lady?" K'an teased.

"You can hit him if you wish..." D'rok told Naki. "Be warned that he may like it howeverâ€|" K'an seemed to grin at the thought.

"No, I'll just let him suffer." Naki smiled back, adding fuel to the fire.

K'an chuckled. "Damn it."

"Hello, once again, miss Cimutee." D'rok finally turned and smiled slightly at her. "How are your endeavors?"

"They are quite fine. I was actually coming here to collect Ryau." She paused with a slight sigh. "I have been requested at an excavation site by one of my former students; SpecOps Science Major Alea 'Vinika."

"Don't take Ryau for too long..." K'an cut in once again. "Sig hardly can do without a male partner for a day."

Ryau rolled his eyes at this.

"Please do be safeâ€|" Sig said as he lowered his hand as if he was going to say something different.

"We should only be gone for a few hoursâ€|" Naki explained as she and Ryau began for the door.

"Ok. Goodâ€| I just got don't talking to the ship master and we are ship bound for the rest of this operation." D'rok exclaimed.

"Understood, we should get going though."

"Take care. Report back to me when you return." D'rok waved them off.

"Will do." The two left quickly.

With the two gone, D'rok and Sig returned their attention back to K'an.

"Soâ€| the mission went alright?" D'rok asked as he crossed his arms.

"Fuck noâ€|" K'an growled in annoyance. "It went absolutely fucking terrible. I got shot!" K'an exclaimed.

"More details, K'anâ€| it wasn't only about you." D'rok sighed.

"Wellâ€| I can dream can't I?" K'an chuckled. "Anyway. It started already as shit. We lost you and then had to go save some down Phantom. We got there, saved some guys and then went to clear the top floors before evac came for them."

"Standard procedureâ€| Sure." D'rok followed along.

"So we went into an elevator to go a two floors down and someone flew a craft into the elevator tube. We were sent into freefall and barely lived through however many hundred floors the building was, only to end up stuck on the ground floor of the city."

"Damnâ€|"

"Yup. And then we trekked several hours just to find a building with a flat roof top. Once we got picked up we had some basic stuff, mostly patrols and more aids; none of which went bad as the first one but still. Then we spent a good amount of time setting up these jammers that essentially did us nothing."

"Alrightâ€|"

"Then we had a flip flop change of orders and were told to play goose chase to try to take out a demon. We flew all over the damn city after him as he took down mock jammers that we had set up inside the city. I ended up smarting up and tried to set up a quick nest for Ryau and me to snipe the demon in the head at the last jammer. Unfortunately some Humans showed up and ruined that. I ended up getting fucking shot through the leg. And now we are here..." K'an

sighed, ending his story.

"Sounds fun. How long are you down?" D'rok asked in a too the point fashion.

"About a two months... and that is just the period for the hard cast." K'an sighed.

"How long until you're out of the bed?"

"Just under a monthâ€|" He sighed. "I should be combat ready after the hard cast."

"Wellâ€| that isn't that long. I am sure that you can somehow get a pairing in that time." D'rok smirked.

"Heh, yeah. That nurse was cute." K'an stopped suddenly. "Speaking of women. Have you seen yours since you got back?"

"Nope. I thought I would make sure that your pathetic hide was still intact first." D'rok smirked widely.

"Har har. Funnyâ€|" K'an gave a low chuckle. "Go see her. I'll stay here with bitch boy." K'an nodded at Sig.

"Gods help meâ€|" Sig let his face drop into his palms.

"Alrightâ€| You two take care please. I will return shortly." D'rok quickly left the two and the medical bay as he went to M'riana's armory.

From there he pepped up his step so he could stop by his room to change into causal clothing. He knew by this time of the day M'riana would not be around there, and so it was safe for him to also grab something for her he had held in his private storage for her. What he had hidden in his things from here was an engagement ring. Normally it was acceptable to give bracelets more often than not, but due to her working in such a mechanized field, he wanted to give her something that she could wear and not get snagged. He was planning on proposing to her back on Sangheilos, he instead wished to wait a bit longer to make sure she was the one. At this current rate he was moving forward with it; he wanted at least someone to have his earnings after all of these years in the event he actually did die.

Soon his trip came to an end as he walked through the large doors of the armory that M'riana worked in. There was but a single Minor in the room that was working feverishly on a Type 25 Plasma Rifle at one of the bench tabled besides the range. He entered briskly to see M'riana working behind the counter. There was but a single split moment before she looked up at him and did a double take with an astonished look about her. She quickly came from behind the counter and up to him.

"D'rok?!" She seemed to be in total disbelief.

D'rok just smiled and opened his arms.

She lunged herself against him in a deep embrace; her strong arms tightly took him around his large, barreled chest. In between unsure

whimpers, she pressed her face against his chest to take in his scent before she leaned up and kissed him very deeply on the mouth. Such a kiss lasted quite a bit as it bordered levels of intimacy that might insinuate mandible play as she lightly pushed D'rok into the wall behind him.

"Theyâ€¦ Told me you were dead!" She looked up deeply into his eyes.

"That is what everyone has hinted at."

"What happened?" Her voice quavered slightly as she choked back on her tears of joy.

"Nothing. I just got separated from the group. That is all." He assured her. "Nothing to worry about. I promise." He spoke quietly as he pulled her against his front in his strong arms.

"Don't do that againâ€¦ please." She sighed and held her head against his unarmored chest.

"I don't plan too." He purred to her softly.

The two held their embrace for at least a minute. Surprisingly the Minor in the room was paying no attention to them. M'riana got her fill of his warmth before she took a step back with a huge blush. D'rok smiled warmly down at her as he slowly slipped his hand into his pocket; his fingers slowly fiddled with the little box that contained his proposal ring. She seemed to notice his certain smile that he held on his face. She knew he was about to do something.

"M'riana?" D'rok smiled as he tried to control his breathing; butterflies were in an all-out assault on his stomach.

"Yes, darling?" She looked up impatiently into his green eyes.

"Do you think it would be possibleâ€¦?" He paused as he pulled out the ring box. "For you to consider being my loving wife?" He said a bit awkwardly as he flipped open the box, revealing a ring that was fitted for her finger. He gave a huge smile behind it as he tried to let some of the butterflies out.

She looked down at the ring and her eyes lit up as she gave a happy squeal.

### 13. Act02 Ch07 Do Us Part

SGTLEGENDKILLED~

>Fate Continuum<br>Act II Chapter VII

"...Do Us Part."

H.C.D. September 19th, 2552

"How do I look?" D'rok asked a bit redundantly as he turned to look into a standing mirror besides he and Sig.

He stood firm yet slightly unsure as he looked over his finely and

freshly polished set of armor in the reflection. It already was time for the wedding ceremony to take place. Despite it being hastily planned, it seemed to be going along smoothly. He looked quite dashing; he had spent many hours detailing his armor with near perfection in mind and the few scuffs and minor scrapes from the Reach invasion had healed and were no more. He had actually looked better now than he had in quite a long time; his armor looked like he had just received them.

"You look fine, you carp." Sig chuckled slightly.

"Thanks, Sig." D'rok smiled at appreciatively.

"Anytime, brother..." Sig smiled back. "You picked a good one I think..."

"Oh? Thanks yet again."

"I hope I can meet a good one someday..." His voice trailed off softly in longing.

D'rok gave Sig's arm a soft pat of assurance. "I'll make sure you will find the one your looking for."

"Thank you, D'rok." Sig sighed slightly. "Now enough of this... This day belongs to you and your lady; not of me and my loneliness."

"Hmm..." D'rok paused slightly. "It is almost that time already, isn't it?"

"It should be." Sig checked his wrist at the time. "They should be here any minute too cue you out to the floor."

As if called out immediately, K'an shambled carefully into the room with them. He limped slightly on his injured leg. He surprisingly had been allowed to walk on it with the aid of a brace and a very taught and firmly placed bio-metic patch that had been suctioned tightly to his leg. The brace had been fitted so that his fairly fresh injury had no weight or strain around the epicenter of the wound.

"Oi! Dress up is over, princess!" K'an bellowed with a tease.

"Gods... They had to send a immobile warrior to ready me on my wedding day?" D'rok jested.

"Yeah. They did. Its because your a slimy, no good bastard."

"Stop being holding such a sense of compensation, K'an." Sig threw in quickly.

"You take a bullet to the leg and see how well you do." K'an snapped back quickly.

"Listen, females... Please cease this squabbling." D'rok laughed.

"Don't call me a female, please. You know this." Sig said suddenly a bit on the defense.

"Quit being such a little girl about it, Sig." K'an added to the fire.

"Must I re-break your leg?" Sig growled softly.

"Friends. Enough. Come now..." D'rok smiled quickly before the two ended their squabbles.

K'an and Sig quickly quieted themselves down and straightened their posture. The two huffed in agreement and made their way passed D'rok so that they could lead him out to the ceremony. The three walked up to the exit of the dress room and stopped. Through that door would be where D'rok and M'riana would become a married couple. K'an looked back at D'rok with a bit of a smug look.

"Well... Last chance to ditch, bud." K'an grinned jokingly.

"Not really... This is the only entrance and exit to the dress room." Sig pointed out softly.

"Gods... Fucking buzz-kill." K'an rolled his eyes. "Lets get to it then."

K'an nodded to Sig and the two then opened the door before the trio. As the two door halves split apart, the light from the ceremonial chamber flooded into the dimmed dressing room. On the other side of the door was the ceremonial chamber than most marriages took place. The chamber was set up much like an amphitheater; looking down at towards the center stage was a large section of seating in the shape of a half crescent. In the middle of the seating arrangement was a walkway that lead from the alter out of the theater that separated the two halves of seating. To their surprise, the place was fairly packed of attendees. A lot of them were acquaintances that D'rok and M'riana happened yet there were still a decent amount of random people. Standing in the center of the stage was a minor San Shyuum prophet who was watching them as he patiently waited for D'rok to enter.

K'an lead in front of Sig as they took the front to escort of D'rok. As they came into view on their way to the stage, the crowd seemed to grow louder in excitement. As much as he'd like to not have a scene be made of his wedding, the fact that one of the most notorious single operative in the SpecOps was getting married was kind of a big deal in the public eye. For some reason everyone was excited for it. Despite the hype, the crowd in the seats behaved and didn't make too much of a commotion.

The trio walked up the steps onto the stage to join the minor prophet. K'an and Sig stopped a few paces from the prophet and split apart in a fashion like they were told to do during the rehearsal earlier. And so, D'rok stepped forward past them to stand besides the Prophet. With a slight smile, the San Shyuum greeted him to the stage and exchanged a nod with D'rok.

"The alter now welcomes Special Operations Officer D'rok Tallaham." The San Shyuum spoke out over the crowd which quieted in response. "And now I invite M'riana Casmee to the alter."

The crowd looked over towards a door on the opposite side of the



amphitheater from which D'rok had come from. For a moment they waited in anticipation as M'riana's pair of friends went to fetch her from the dressing room. Several quiet moments later the doors opened and her two companions stepped out of the dressing room as they began their escort. D'rok watched happily as his lady emerged from the dressing room. M'riana held her hands clasped in front of her as she politely followed her two escorts towards the stage. D'rok smiled at the sight of her; she was gorgeous in her polished weapon smith armor. She carefully took her steps up onto the alter until she stood on the other side of the San Shyuum.

"Welcome, sir and miss." The San Shyuum bowed to the two briefly. "Let us begin."

The San Shyuum cleared his throat as the chamber room grew silent.

"A millennium ago, two races from different worlds were in a great feud. But within time, they united and formed a writ of Union... Now... today, we celebrated two Sangheili of different keeps to form their own writ of union, a bond of blood and love." As the San Shyuum spoke, his colorful manner seemed to reverberate through the chamber in a nearly supernatural way. "Tallaham: born of un-unionized Space territory and by hail of the State of Zelso; and Casmee, born of the State of Vadam and by hail of the State of Zelso... Today, the two have chosen to unite their keeps under one name." He paused to smile to the two. "Tallaham? Would you care to share how you two met?" He smiled towards D'rok.

D'rok took a deep breath to choke down the slight discomfort he had at the moment before speaking. "The two of us came to know each other about two months ago just outside of the Varo City Airport. I was driving home when I found this lovely female struggling with her luggage on the side of the road. I kindly stopped and offered the service of my vehicle as transportation." He chuckles slightly, remembering the situation. "And... we almost got to her residence when the main road was rendered unusable due to a storm. We decided to just stay at my place of rest until I could take her home. The rest is... just childish love and happiness... and no one really wants those details." D'rok ended with a slight chuckle. This left M'riana in a slight blush and the viewers responded with mixed laughter

"Very well..." The San Shyuum continued on with the sermon. "These two have chosen to unite two families in a sacred bond, walk the sacred path together and go as one into the great journey. D'rok Tallaham and M'riana Casmee, one, together for eternity. We are gathered here to celebrate their commitment to each other. Tallaham, do you take Casmee to be your wife?"

D'rok smiled and answered with little anticipation. "Yes."

"And Casmee, do you take Tallaham to be your husband?"

"Yes I do" She smile happily.

The priest nodded too K'an and to the left female that had escorted M'riana from the dressing room; as was common practice as the chosen ones to present the marital objects to each of the couple for placement. K'an stepped forward and offered D'rok a small box he had

chosen many days before the wedding. D'rok took the box and opened it carefully to reveal a gold clad necklace; its design was simple yet it held a prestigious sheen to it. He took it from the box and gave the box back to K'an. With both hands now free, he took the necklace and carefully lifted it to place it over M'riana's neck. As he placed it, his eyes were locked with hers; and on this night, her blue eyes seemed deepest he had ever seen them.; aybe it had something to do with the current moment. After he had placed the necklace around her neck, her main escort handed her a small box in which housed a ring that matched a very similar design as the necklace. She took it from the box and took D'rok's right hand and carefully placed it onto his finger.

The San Shyuum, pleased with how well this ceremony had been going, decided to close it nicely. "Now let the two be one." and on his words, D'rok approached M'riana and with great passion, he took her with his arms around her and kissed her with the best he could offer to her.

The two became quickly lost in each other in their embrace as the watching crowd cheered and celebrated loudly at the joining of the two. As D'rok closed his eyes and slipped his mandibles in between M'riana's, forming a locking of jaws, the confetti was thrown about; the crowd's cheering became louder; spectating couples kissed and embraced each other; and other veterans popped alcoholic beverages in the manner in which they mist violently into the air. The kiss that seemed to go on for an hour slowly winded down between the newly weds. They were left staring fondly into each others eyes as they briefly pulled away from each other.

M'riana's smile faded quickly as she suddenly leaned forward towards him. "I'm sorry..."

D'rok tilted his head slightly as she spoke the soft words into his ears. "W...what?" He asked confused.

His confusion was quickly cleared as M'riana drew a small electrified shank from the small of her back and plunged it into his right side above the hip. As the tip plunged through his skin suit, the shank delivered a high payload of electricity throughout his body. His consciousness barely held to him long enough for him to feel his knees give out under him.

#### 14. Act03 Ch01 Heretic

SGTLEGENDKILLED~

Fate Continuum

Act III

><em>"Now By These Rings Do We Separate As One"<em>

Chapter I

"Heretic"

H.C.D. September 19th, 2552

K'an was taken in complete surprise when he saw D'rok suddenly spasm

before he dropped like a stone to the floor of the stage. He should have instantly grown suspicious once M'riana grew a unusually serious face before whispering into D'rok's ear. He didn't even pick up on anything as she watched her draw and pierce the shiv into his friend's side. With a loud growl he snapped a piercing look at his friend's attacker as he quickly snapped his hand to his Plasma Rifle on his hip.

As his fingers began to graze the handle of the weapon, he watched as one of M'riana's escorts, who had instantly somehow snapped a Type 51 Carbine to her shoulder, fire a single shot which struck the weapon on his hip. The weapon, being shot by the mini-fuel rod round, was thrown useless to the floor from it's magnetic holster. Without a second of hesitation, the carbine wielding escort jerked her aim to him and began plugging shots against his shields rapidly. K'an stumbled back from the force of the rounds slamming against his quickly depleting shields before they cracked apart. He stumbled with a yelp from two more rounds that his chest armor barely handled before Sig, yelling triumphantly in a fit of rage, dodged in front of him to prevent any further rounds from hitting him. Sig's shields began to take several rounds as well, but he was more prepared than K'an had been and had begun to spray plasma bolts from his Plasma Repeater at the trio of aggressors. His firing was enough to deter the escort and her well placed shots while the other two began to move for cover.

Now without the force and direct threat of more carbine rounds, he ducked behind Sig under the protection Sig had given with the suppression fire of his repeater. K'an quickly snatched Sig's Plasma pistol from his hip and began to fire around Sig's side as the two moved towards cover. K'an did his best to take shots at M'riana; the bitch would need to be snuffed out if he would have anything to say about it. The two quickly got into cover behind a decorative pillar just a few steps to their right. K'an snuggled up with Sig and blind fired several rounds over the pillar's edge as both of their shields recharged. He managed to catch a glance out towards the crowd, wondering why no one was helping. The answer was quite clear: There was quite the amount of small arms fire being thrown around by this spontaneous group of presumably terrorist militants. The militants and Covenant Warriors were nearly all engaged in some sort of combat.

K'an gave a frustrated growl at this before leaning up slowly around the edge of the pillar to take aim at M'riana. He fired a few bolts at her as Sig too, sprayed plasma to keep the escorts in cover. She clung behind her cover at the other end of the stage to where K'an couldn't pop a good shot off at her. She seemed to stop caring about firing back at he and Sig, and instead yelled something into an ear piece before pulling a detonator from her chest. K'an's eyes grew slightly as she flipped the button cover and swiftly plunged the ignition down. She and the other militants braced harshly as an explosion rang out from somewhere distant from the rear of the ship; The payload must have been great as the ship shuttered violently from it.

K'an flinched in fear of what she could have just done. He would have hoped these militants would have not been stupid to breach the hull or destroy something like the air filtration systems. Unfortunately to the unaware, the ship very violently began to decelerate out of slip space. Due to the obvious lack of dampening systems, it was one

of the hardest deceleration he had probably experienced in his years of service. Luckily, he had gotten a hand on the edge of Sig and his cover to brace himself from toppling over. The two grunted from the strain; Sig did his best not to add force against K'an in respects of his already injured leg. The deceleration began to lighten as the ship slowed moments later. That is when the two noticed Ryau barreling straight towards the two across the stage.

Ryau, who had been in the process of joining the two on stage to help, had nothing to grip once the deceleration started. Due to this, he had been thrown to the ground to where he would slide across the waxed stage like a 400 lb hockey puck. Despite this nearly comical scene of instance, Ryau covered his head in self preservation as he slammed into K'an and Sig's legs. While Sig was able to take the impact of Ryau's mass, K'an was taken to the floor where he would continue with Ryau's now slowed trajectory towards the rear end of the stage. If the impact of Ryau wasn't enough to greatly pain his struggling leg, the impact of his chin on the floor was. The ship, as it continued its deceleration process fueled the two's slide. In hopes to grab something and slow the both of them, K'an took hold Ryau's chest piece.

Ryau eventually had found something to grab at before they hit the edge, to much their dismay, his grip slipped as soon as he had given the attempt and it did little but turn the two around so it was a 'K'an first' slide. Without anything to slow them down, the two slide off the rear of the stage. With the lack of platform under them, the two fell a good Sangheili's height to the metal bulkhead beneath them. K'an had somehow braced himself and managed to not hurt himself much from the fall but was unable to move so that Ryau wouldn't fall on him immediately after. K'an gave an agonizing scream as Ryau fell over onto K'an's lap, causing an audible crack of K'an's failing brace and leg breaking once again to ring out over the sound of their colliding bodies. Ryau rolled off K'an quickly as the ship jerked one final time as it ended its deceleration.

K'an writhed and twitched in pain as he continued to yell out. For him, he would argue that the pain of his now unnaturally twisted leg was more painful than when it had been broken the first time. He barely came to from the pain enough to grab Ryau into a less than friendly embrace. In a fit of pained rage, K'an growled viciously as he slammed his fist into Ryau's unarmored side.

"You stupid motherfucker!" K'an screamed in Ryau's ear in anger as tears streamed from his eyes.

K'an sort of immediately regretted hitting Ryau. While it was his fault for messing up the 'standing-while-decelerating' club, he couldn't have really known to prepare for it. After a moment he let go of Ryau and rolled off onto his back to try to focus on breathing. Ryau got up with his new pain on his side and got up to rest himself behind a solid piece of the stage. The sounds of the firefight briefly picked up in the amphitheater before the fighting seemed to move further away into the hallway. Without people shooting up the place any further, Sig dropped down from the stage to join K'an and Ryau. Naki hopped down from the stage, joining Ryau where he stood.

"Are you two alright?!" She panted desperately.

"No I'm not fucking alright! My fucking leg broke thanks to that fucking fat ass!" K'an shouted through the pain as he gestured to Ryau. "What kind of stupid fucking question is that?!" The jerking movement of his dramatic gesture caused a spike of pain to shoot violently through his leg. K'an growled loudly before yelling out a subtle 'fuck!'

"Stay still, K'an!" Sig quickly took a knee next to K'an and began to reach for his small medical kit on his back.

"Where is D'rok?!" K'an huffed through basic breath control. "Is he OK!?"

"He's fine! He is still unconscious on the floor." Sig nearly shouted on his nerves.

"Well go get him!"

"K'an! Silence yourself!" Sig turned to Naki and Ryau as he pulled the medical kit in front of it. "Naki! Ryau! Help me with his leg!"

The two quickly joined him besides K'an's broken leg.

"Get that brace off." Sig spoke tautly "Its not going to do us any good now."

As Naki carefully used her energy dagger to remove K'an's new useless brace, Sig pulled a small stamp syringe from the medical kit firmly in his fist before pulling the safety cover from the bottom of it. He then moved over K'an and raised his fist above the broken leg before plunging it against K'an's skin suit. On contact of his skin, the syringe delivered its payload of painkiller into K'an's leg with an audible click. To much surprise, K'an gave only a soft grunt at this without complaint.

"Ok. Help me reset the leg." Sig ordered the two.

"What?!" K'an protested loudly as they took a hold of his leg.

Despite K'an's demands to not do as such, the two quickly pulled and jerked his broken leg to set it as correctly as they could. Ryau, with the help of Naki, seemed to know what he what he was doing as he had once done this already.

"Fuck!" K'an screamed as he clenched from from pain that was only beginning to now lessen from the painkillers.

With the leg now reset to the best that a trained field medic could provide, Sig stood from K'an and turned on his comm piece to see where the militants had gone. The open communication channels were quite active about their position and where they were headed. Surprisingly the militants had nearly reached the nearby hangar bays. There also seemed to be a lot more of them then was in the amphitheater; this was a serious movement. Sig looked up to see Rtas Vadumee hop down next to them.

"Sir!" Sig lowered his hand from his head and stood at attention.

"At ease, Warrior." He spoke quickly. "Are you all alright?" He asked as he put his energy sword hilt back onto his hip.

"We are fine. K'an's leg has been broken once again from a previous injury, Ryau and I have not received injury, and D'rok is unharmed but unconscious on the stage as of this instance." Sig gulps. "I should have not left him there, sir. I apologize."

"No. That is fine, you did what would have been expected of you, Valhamee. Good work." Rtas nodded and looked at K'an. "You are sure that he is alright?"

"Yeah... I am just fucking peachy!" K'an growled as he rested his head back to try to relax.

Rtas sighed after experiencing a slice of K'an's attitude before turning from them with his finger to his ear. "They are going to leave the ship." He paused "Yes, Ship-master." He paused yet again. "Honestly? I would rather let them leave. There is nothing out in the middle of no where for them. Let them escape so that the engineers can fix the Leveling Strength's engines so that we may continue on with the rest of our fleet." He then sighed softly and nodded. "Yes, Ship-master. I will ensure that everything is taken care of. It will be done."

Sig approached Rtas after he finished on his comm piece. "Sir! Would you be bothered if I asked you to request a medical team for the wounded?"

"No. I would not be, although it would be to each individual whether or not they wanted medical attention."

"Well... I sure as hell would love medical attention." K'an barked from the floor.

Rtas rolled his eyes and looked down towards the floored Sangheili. "I quite truthfully can state that you are lucky that you are a fine shot, Retmar'ee. For if you were you not, I am very certain D'rok would have left your side long ago." He grinned with the slight hint of a jester.

"Left my side? Ha!" K'an snorted. "We are practically married... well... until today that was." K'an chuckled quickly. "Speaking of which? When do I get my part of the divorce settlement." Sig buried his face into his palm.

"Even in grave injury..." Rtas groaned helplessly. "You still manage ways to expose your inner idiocy..."

Before K'an could retort, Sig jumped in with a sense of seriousness. "What do we about D'rok?"

"Ah yes..." Rtas paused as he glanced over at D'rok's unconscious for. "Providing that he is physically unharmed, I would give persuasion towards Cinotee, Cimutee, and yourself to take him back to your barracks. I would give aid to the task however I am currently required here." He suggested.

"What of K'an?" Sig questioned quickly.

"As much as it would please me to have him spaced, I will bite thy tongue and make sure that he gets his medical attention." Rtas shook his head slightly in assurance to the squad.

"I'll stay with him until the medical team arrives." Naki offered.

"Oo! I get to stay and flirt with the lady!" K'an jeered.

Naki threatened him quietly with the pressure of her boot on the wound.

"Very well." Sig, ignoring K'an, politely bowed his head to Rtas before looking down at K'an. "I will come visit you after D'rok has come too. Alright?"

"Yeah, yeah... You should be there anywhere... We wouldn't want him to cry too much, would we?" K'an waved them off before giving Naki a wagging eyebrow.

Without another word, the two gave quick nods to Rtas as they parted from K'an. Ryau quickly helped Sig up onto the stage before going to D'rok. Somehow Sig had been right, despite the on-stage firefight, the only injury that D'rok had received was the very small insertion point of the shiv M'riana shoved into him. That had only resulted in a slight trickle of blood and would give no serious quells later. And so the two lifted D'rok from the floor and began to carry him out of the amphitheater.

Ryau and Sig passed several casualties and injured members of the Covenant on their way towards the barracks. The militants had really gave a beating to the warriors on the ship, and so there was quite the amount of damage from there to the hangars. Of those who were noticing the two carry D'rok past them, several of them past their condolences to the unconscious figure. Sig remained wordless until they had passed the majority of the wreckage before sparking up conversation.

"...I still have no idea what really happened. It was so quick... What did you see?" Sig asked Ryau.

"Not much... Just that she seemed to shove something underneath his chest piece." He admitted, thinking back briefly as he pictured the past. "That's it."

"What after that though?" Sig looked over and around D'rok's limp head. "Like...where did all of the other militants come from?"

"They were with her..." Ryau once again. "...Like the her bridal escorts and some of the crowd."

Sig sighed and looked down at the passing floor plates. "Well... What do you think the motive is though? Why would they do this today? To D'rok?" He quivered at the possibilities.

"I don't know" Ryau admitted.

"Ok... Lets get him back to the barracks and then you may return to the amphitheater if you wish"

"Well there isn't really a need to go back..." Sighed.

Sig perked up slightly at this. "Well... I would love to actually have another male to talk too..." Sig paused slightly to poorly readjust D'rok on his shoulder to hide a small gulp that rose suddenly in his throat.

"Wait... Naki is back there..." Ryau changed his mind. "...and I should probably apologize to K'an"

Sig gave a quick nod of defeat. "Yeah... Your right." He sighed.  
\_Damn you, Cinotee!\_

The two finally reached the barracks and quickly set up a cot for D'rok before quickly setting him down on it. With the brief help of Ryau, Sig removed all of D'rok's armor from the waist up so that he could cut open the skin suit and begin to treat D'rok's small injury. He began to close up the minor wound with some basic bio-adhesive gel after Ryau had left to rejoin Naki and K'an. Since he had swiftly tended to the wound, he was left to sit and patiently; the most excitement he had during the wait was a brief marvel that the Leveling Strength had been fixed and was already back up in slip space only behind schedule about an hour. Eventually D'rok came back to reality from his unconscious state. Sig watched as D'rok's eyes suddenly shot open only seconds before he sat up with a slight struggle.

"D'rok! Are you alright?" Sig stood quickly to aid his friend. "Take it easy."

D'rok growled softly at the pain of his side and in his hearts.  
"Silence..."

"Don't try to move too much. Please." Sig unfortunately tried to instruct.

Despite Sig's concern, D'rok stood aggressively. "I told you to silence yourself, Sig!" he barked viciously at Sig.

Sig clammed up quickly and watched as D'rok, without a following word, quickly stormed off to his office; closing the door and locking it behind him. For the next hour, Sig would wait impatiently waiting for the door to open or to hear some noise from behind the door. He feared the worse immediately; he feared the possibility of a reality where D'rok might have ended his life. This was far from the truth as it would be, as all D'rok really had been doing was sitting in his office chair staring down at his desk with his cheek in his left palm; watching the small puddle forming below his face as his tears ran off of his cheek onto the desk below.

D'rok really didn't think on too much other than the fact that he was trying to piece what exactly had happened. He didn't remember all that much before begin rendered unconscious. The wedding was a setup for something significant; he knew that M'riana wasn't stupid enough to waste something like this for nothing. While for the life of him he couldn't really figure out what, but he had to live with the basic fact that it happened and she was responsible. As he silently pondered what could have been instead, he softly ran his thumbs over the ring that he just recently received from the only love he'd had



in a very long time.

After a while of his pained thinking, the sound of the barracks door opening and close as the sound of Naki and Ryau entering was heard. This was followed by a stern knock on his office. The rapping of the knuckles slightly startled him and so he gave a soft growl as he quickly wiped his tears from his face and desk. He listened for whoever it was to address them with his finger over the entry button on his desk.

"Officer Tallaham!" The unexpected voice of Rtas Vadumee spoke firmly through the door. "This is Special Operations Commander, Rtas Vadumee. I demand that you open this door for me!"

Without hesitation, D'rok opened the door from behind the desk to see Rtas standing there with an medium sized box tucked under his right arm. He had a slight smug look on his face as he hummed as if he had just won some bet. With a sigh he entered D'rok's office and set his box on D'rok's desk. Once he had placed the box carefully down he closed the door before returning it to its locked state.

"Friend... Are you alright?" Rtas asked, concerned as he sat in the chair opposing D'rok.

D'rok exhaled slowly and rested back in his chair. "I am honestly not sure..." he answered quite softly.

Rtas raised an eyebrow. "Are you still in a state of confusion?" he tilted his head slightly. "If so, the ship-master and I have come to the exact explanation of what transpired."

D'rok sighed once again and rested his cheek in his hand which was propped against the arm of the chair. "Lets hear it then."

"Well..." Rtas began. "From what we gather from what transpired was that your 'lovely' significant other had been recruiting many of dozens of members of the Covenant for some separatist group..." He explained.

"Of course..." D'rok softly snorted distastefully.

"Precisely... We have no details as of now on this populous of traitors." Rtas paused to wet his mandibles. "We do know they are quite intelligent as a group." Rtas admired before even getting to the juicy details.

"Oh? So they are unlike the usual band of Kig' Yar pirates that usually crop up around on occasion?"

Rtas nodded. "How they executed their escape was quite impressive" he scoffed slightly. "Do not tell the ship-master that I speak this in such a way. My gods, I would never hear the end of it." Rtas chuckled in a much friendlier tone as he broke the ice with a long time friend.

D'rok shrugged. "How did they do it?" He asked bluntly.

"Well. It would seem that someone had placed a small detonator charge on the inside of the main terminal on the computer mainframe that controlled the slip space drives. The charge wasn't even enough to

open a lightly stuck door."

"So minimal collateral damage?"

"Yes! In fact it only took one of our Huragoks but a minute to simply reroute the controls to another terminal. It had given them just enough time to make an escape with a squad of our Phantoms."

"How did M'riana get out of the amphitheater? The place was filled with attendees." D'rok grumbled.

"We have estimated that over a half of the attendees were recruits for the heretics... They used your wedding as a gather and start point."

D'rok closed his eyes as he heard this. "Damn it all..."

"Apologies, friend..." Rtas softly gave some comforting support. "While this may be the end of your endeavors with her... I feel that we must embrace it as yet another brush of death that you have survived... And so I have brought a personal souvenir of mine from home for such an occasion." He spoke optimistically as he undid the metal clamps on his box and opened it to reveal a pair of decorative drinking glasses and a large closed bottle of very aged fine wine.

"Rtas... You needn't waste this stuff on me..." D'rok sat up, slightly mortified.

"Oh you hush. It was in my original intentions when I purchased this to share it with you. I have been waiting until K'an to finally die from his over use of his own mouth... but I guess now is a better time than ever." Rtas threw the joke out there with a warm chuckle as he uncorked the bottle and carefully filled the two glasses.

D'rok chuckled and rubbed his face before Rtas handed him one of the filled glasses.

"To another day in this life and to good health!" Rtas clinked his glass lightly with D'rok's before the both of them took a sip from the glasses. It was quite a good batch of alcohol.

"Thank you for this... again." D'rok sighed as he took another sip from his glass.

"No matter." Rtas nodded. "I also spoke with the ship master and I have assured that you and your team will not encounter combat for at least a full two days unless you wish too. In light of your marriage fallout, the ship master gladly granted these terms to you."

D'rok was speechless for a moment. "You know..." he started as he looked down at his glass.

"Hmm?"

"The Humans have many colorful words for females like M'riana..."

"Oh really?" Rtas looked up in interest. He always had a thing about the Human's language.

"Yes..." D'rok hummed. "I think my favorite is \_'cunt.'\_" He gave a slight smile of satisfaction as the English word rolled off his tongue.

Rtas chuckled. "That is a hilarious sounding word." Rtas repeated it softly. "Why isn't it used very often in the field?"

"That is because it is reserved for females like M'riana."

"Ah..."

D'rok got quiet and looked back down at the glass of wine. "She never asked me about any Separatist group..." D'rok admitted.

"Well... I am not surprised." Rtas pondered. "What if she would have?"

D'rok paused to think. "I would have joined them."

Rtas chuckled slightly. "Then they might have stood a fighting chance against the Covenant."

"Maybe... I am not so sure..." D'rok twirled the liquid slightly in the glass.

Rtas sighed audibly. "Well... Regardless of your alignment in faction, D'rok... You have done and survived more than most of the warriors that the Covenant have throughout all of its might. If anyone is worthy of the Great Journey, it would be you..." He paused. "Even if you don't believe in that sort of thing... which I know you don't." Rtas chuckled and winked at D'rok with another sip of his drink.

"Cheers to that, friend." D'rok took a long sip and emptied his glass with his friend.

With hardly any words left to really drive a conversation, the two old friends sat at D'rok's desk sipping away several glasses of the wine for some time. Whether there was talking or not seemed to hold no matter in the situation. The two had been through so much as individuals that they wouldn't have the time to just openly speak about it freely in the duration of the remainder of the day. Their drinks were interrupted by a much calmer deceleration than earlier that morning.

"We just exited slip space?" Rtas asked surprised after almost spilling his drink.

"Yes." D'rok sighed calmly.

"Why wasn't their an announcement?"

"I silenced the overhead speaker as it was of annoyance. Higher ups were using it to contact me on a regular basis. If they wanted to get a hold of me they can hail my data pad." D'rok explained.

"I could have guessed that..." Rtas exhaled calmly before drinking a bit more wine.

Suddenly there was a rapid series of knocking on the door of D'rok's office. The small intercom speaker next to the door flashed on.

"D'rok! You need to come out and see this!" Sig called through excitedly.

D'rok sighed and stood slowly. "Well... We had better go see what has him riled up." he set his glass on his desk carefully before making his way towards the door.

"Very well. Give me but a second." Rtas finished his glass and set the glass down before following D'rok through the door.

The two exited the office to see Naki, Ryau, and Sig standing in front of the projected holograph on the long length of the wall of the barracks. They were watching the feed of space that was optional to the holographs to imitate exterior windows in order to make the barracks seem less claustrophobic. On the screen they were so compelled towards was the view of a red gaseous planet that took up most of the screen. However, what they were looking at was not the planet, but instead a colossal sized ring that seemed dwarfed only by the planet next to it.

"By the gods..." Rtas approached the screen nearly speechless.

At the sight of it, D'rok's eyes grew slightly as he began to swiftly hit some very faint memories from very long before in his life. He approached the screen for a better view and clasped his hands in the small of his back. Even in his slightly buzzed state from the alcohol he recognized the ring world immediately. To his right, a faint forgotten tune rumbled in Ryau's throat was inexplicably ignored by ear. The basic realization of what he was looking at quickly cast his very form into a shuddering grimace. What D'rok quickly realized is that he was staring face to face with something that he quickly he remembered from his Human years; something that he had barely considered he would ever experience. The basic realization of this notion quickly cast him into speechlessness.

This was the Halo ring.

15. Act03 Ch02 DNR 1 (Do Not Resuscitate)

SGTLEGENDKILLED~

Fate Continuum

Act III

Chapter II

"D.N.R. (Do Not Resuscitate) I"

H.C.D. September 20th, 2552)

D'rok sat against the metallic bench of the Sangheilian training room besides several younger Special Operations Sangheili. He crossed his arms and shook his head slightly as he, along with an entire line of

eager-to-watch Sangheili as a pair of warriors began in the sparing ring before them. On the one side of the ring, Rtas stood strong and ready to go; facing him was a younger Special Operations Officer, a Sub-Commander Beno Kusovai.

The two were starting yet another sparing match so that the other Sangheili could witness how two veterans fought with swords. While some of the younger warriors were greatly invested in their awed interest, D'rok was hardly impressed for he had seen too much sword combat in the field. With a sword in each hand, the two swordsmen prepared for their next session of fighting. Rtas had good form and Kusovai was a great swordsman despite the fact he far too greatly enjoyed the lime light and was quite the pushover. Rtas had even offered for D'rok to step in and take him on in the ring, and to much dismay of the excited youths, he declined several times. Everyone spectating straightened slightly as the sparing match started.

Kusovai started strong with a hard-charging advance at Rtas whilst giving a swift right swing across Rtas' front. Rtas quickly slid back on his hooves to avoid the swipe of the metal sparing blade. With a great sense of recoil, he swiped back furiously, getting quite close to his rival's chest. In result of the backlash, Kusovai gave another powerful swipe as he hopped forward towards Rtas. As Kusovai landed and quickly regained his footing, Rtas dove towards his rival, using his mass to tackle Kusovai. Mid-tackle, Kusovai instinctively drove his sword up, unfortunately sending the tip through the flesh of Rtas' side. Rtas visibly cringed at this as he stopped his tackle with his knees straddling Kusovai against the floor. Though he had received a minor stab wound to his side, he leaned forward to glare deeply at Kusovai.

"What did Sub-Commander Kusovai do wrong?" Rtas huffed softly as he posed a question to his observers.

"He did nothing wrong, sir." One of the Majors next to D'rok spoke up. "You would be dead if he had not turned his blade at the last second."

"Correct" He grunted as he removed Kusovai's blade from his side and stood. "But my inertia would have carried my blade forward and ended his life as well." He paused quickly as he offered his hand to Kusovai who still lay on the floor. Kusovai took the offered hand and Rtas pulled him up with another soft grunt. "Just because I would be dead does not mean my threat is ended."

"Yes, Commander." The Major agreed with a nod.

Rtas stood tall to finish his final sparing match for his Majors and Minors. "Kusovai is out best in sword combat, so I had to use other means to defeat him. I achieved victory at the cost of my own life. A tactic that can only be used once, but still a valid one." he paused for a moment to think. "Due to his superior skills he could have ended the fight in a way that did not end his life, but chose not to think so... creatively." Rtas waved the Sangheili warriors free of the sparing benches.

As they parted, Kusovai approached Rtas quietly. "I apologize for injuring you, Commander. In the future I will handle my blade with more skill."

"It is an insignificant injury..." Rtas sighed as if he was not bothered by the injury. "It will heal."

Kusovai went to further protest for his apology but instead was cut off by the holographic platform turning on to reveal the Supreme Commander of The Covenant, Thel Vadamee

"Commander." The Supreme Commander spoke powerfully through the speakers of the platform. "You are needed on the bridge immediately. Have the rest of your team prepare for boarding action." He hardly waited for an answer before he closed the call from his end; something serious must have come up.

Rtas waited until the call had ended completely before turning to everyone in the training room. "Report to the armory and meet me in the primary hangar in ten minutes!" He turned to Kusovai. quickly "Sub-Commander Kusovai, find where the Unggoy are and get them to the hangar as well."

"As you say, Commander." Kusovai snapped to attention proudly. "Hopefully we will at last go to Halo and get to test ourselves against the Humans and their Demon."

Rtas quickly left for the bridge. As he did Kusovai reminded that the group of Sangheili were to head to their armory and gear up. He turned smugly to D'rok and snorted. "That includes you too, Tallaham!" He shot with distaste.

D'rok rolled his eyes and got up from the bench and began his way towards the exit. He had been with this Lance for the past day. After the emotionally draining failure of a marriage, Rtas had offered to transfer him into his Special Operations group to help possibly train some of his underlings. D'rok had accepted quickly as he figured it might help him keep his mind off the whole thing and despite his very recent emotional fallout, he motioned for Rtas to let him attend any happenings that might transpired. He feared that with nothing going on, his idle mind would be the death of him. For the time being, he had left Sig to take care of K'an until Far Beyond Provocation would be back up to snuff. And to add to the package, Rtas threw in a brand new set of up to date armor.

He followed the rest of Rtas' soldiers as Kusovai quickly took the lead towards the armory in between the practice rooms and the hangers. As he walked with the group he could feel each of them cross looks at him. They were all young, mostly being just half a campaign from enlistment, and now they were among yet another legend. They were already being led by the famous Rtas Vadumee, and now they had a very well known and notorious Special Operations Officer with them. If there was any truth to this he would feel as if it was his obligation to fulfill the stories and tales that trickled and spread throughout the military.

The only thing that might get in the way of that would be Kusovai, who clearly didn't enjoy the fact that D'rok was now with them. The main thing that might have fueled the fire was Kusovai knew very well that D'rok would not be commanded by him, and so this made D'rok a threat. Kusovai had tried several times to test D'rok in the last day that he had been with the group to very little avail. To whatever the reason may be, if anything serious was to come of it, D'rok would

snuff it out effectively. But until then he would stay quiet and not react too much to it.

Soon the entire group of Sangheili reached the armory before Kusovai quickly went to get the rest of the Unggoy who were not quite there yet. D'rok waited for a moment to get up to the window for his Type-51M, as many magazines for the thing as he could carry, and a plasma rifle for his side. He also took a few plasma grenades, a single ration, and a unit of water. The equipment choice might have been considered weird, yet in trade of this he would be prepared for any sort of issues later on. Not surprisingly enough, most of the inventory was taken up by ammo for his Carbine. This of course took him a bit longer than normal as he had to figure out the best way to have his gear set up with the new set of armor. And while the new armor didn't provide as much of his joints and legs as the last generation of armor did, it had more places for gear. With himself taken care of, D'rok put himself on the edge of the armory as he waited for the rest of everyone else to get ready.

D'rok crosses his arms and leaned against the wall with a sigh. It wasn't taking long for everyone to actually get their gear, what was taking time though was putting it on their armor. It was typical young warrior speed and was nothing to be upset about. D'rok was just happy to see that this group of Special Operations seemed to very helpful of each other regardless of whether the warrior was Sangheili or Unggoy. It was clear that Rtas had taught this Lance quite well.

With a soft exhale, D'rok looked over to see an Unggoy struggling with his gear. D'rok's interest was sparked greatly when he noticed immediately that the Unggoy was struggling to load a magazine into a Human MA5B. It was not as big a deal as some would assume. It was most likely a trophy that the Unggoy had pulled off a Human that he had killed. Collections of such items was hardly uncommon throughout the Covenant for Unggoy who proved to be productive. However, seeing as the Unggoy was struggling with the weapon, D'rok quickly got up from the wall and approached the Unggoy to help.

"Now where did you find such a piece of weaponry?" D'rok asked curiously.

The Unggoy nearly dropped the weapon in fear as he looked up at D'rok. "It is from a Human kill!" He replied quickly and quite boldly.

"Very well done." D'rok praised him to ease the possibility of tension. "Do you need help with it?"

The Unggoy looked up at him while tilting his head. "Yes... I need help." He admitted, surprised that a Sangheili was offering to help him with a Human weapon. "This ammo box won't go into the gun." He pointed at the magazine which was not going far enough into the weapon to be secured correctly.

"May I see it?" D'rok held out his hand for it.

"Yes." The Unggoy handed the weapon to D'rok.

D'rok took the weapon and inspected it quickly. The first place he looked was the magazine well of the gun; once he took the magazine of

the weapon and set it on the table beside him it was quite obvious what the problem was. A bullet casing that most likely failed to eject correctly had gotten jammed in between the bolt and the top of the magazine well. Knowing the problem at hand, he turned the weapon towards the floor and gripped the weapon's charging handle before pulling it back. The jammed round fell out of the magazine well and clinked softly on the floor. He took a magazine from the table next to him and quickly slid the magazine into it's appropriate position. He pulled the charging handle twice, once to load a round into the chamber, and the second to see if the cartridge would eject properly. As soon as the bullet fell to the floor, the Unggoy retrieved the two floored round and placed them in a weapons crate in front of him on the floor. Inside the weapons crate was several magazines of ammunition for the MA5B next to a Type - 33 Fuel Rod Cannon.

"You fix!" The Unggoy "Gre'toy is grateful!"

"Your welcome. If that happens again, pull this knob back." D'rok handed it back to him while pointing him to the charging handle.

"Thanks..." Gre'toy tilted his head. "What is name, Warrior?"

"D'rok Tallaham." D'rok nodded respectfully.

"Ah! Gre'toy has heard of this one. You know Human things! What else can you teach Gre'toy?" he asked enthusiastically.

D'rok smiled and obliged by quickly explaining the safety features on the weapon before anything else. Before he got along too far he was gripped forcefully by the shoulder from behind. If he would have a bit more on the cuff, he might have turned around and decked whoever gave the rough action to him. Instead he turned to see Kusovai next to him, with his hand on D'rok's shoulder pad.

"I see you are well versed in Human weaponry!" He gave fake praise as he shook D'rok lightly from side to side.

D'rok shrugged Kusovai's hand from his shoulder. "Do not touch me."

"Oh... apologies!" Kusovai snorted. "I was just listening how you have a vast knowledge of filthy weapons but not the elegant weapons of the Sangheili ways." Kusovai judged heavily.

"I have a knowledge of all weaponry, Kusovai." D'rok shot aggressively, trying to get the Sub-Commander off of him. "How do you think I've survived 25 years in the field?"

"Pure luck, Tallaham... Pure luck." Kusovai challenged. "Now if you have such an affinity for all weapons, why not show how you are with the sword?" He growled.

D'rok turned to fully face Kusovai with a widened stand to match the intimidation that the younger Kusovai was portraying. "Because I do not wish to use them."

"Is there a reason?"

"It is the same reason in which you fail to use a Carbine or a Fuel



Rod Cannon."

Kusovai snorted loudly. "The sword is of an elegant status. A simple range weapon is not."

"Why does it matter so much? Compensating for something?" D'rok challenged.

"I need no compensation for anything, Tallaham; I am a swordsman."

"That has no reflection on how well of a warrior you are."

"Oh?" Kusovai smiled, liking the attention. "Prove this to me!" He gave an inviting opening of arms for D'rok.

D'rok grimaced at him before approaching Kusovai. When he was just before him he looked down at Kusovai's sword. "May I?"

Kusovai scoffed slightly before taking his sword hilt from his side and offering it to D'rok. "By all means. Show me what you have, Tallaham."

D'rok took the hilt and looked down at it for a moment. He gave a quick 'hmm' before tossing the hilt several meters to the side.

"By gods! What are you doing?!" Kusovai demanded so loud that everyone in the whole armory would now be watching the commotion. "You pick that up this instant!"

D'rok looked up with a slight grin. "No."

Kusovai swallowed as his mandibles twitched while his mind raced upon how to handle this situation.

"What are you without your weapons, Sub-Commander?" D'rok tilted his head ever so slightly as he stared deeply into the fearing warrior's eyes. "Do you know what I see before me now?" D'rok asked rhetorically. "I see a child."

Kusovai swallowed yet again before trying to standing up for himself. "You do not speak to me that way, Tallaham!" He shouted at D'rok as he tried to gain some leverage over him.

"I will speak to you how I wish, Kusovai." D'rok, unfazed by the younger warriors attempt to topple him, retorted calm and collectively. "If you wish for me to give you any respect from here on in, you will fight me fist to fist."

Kusovai immediately balled his fists at his sides, yet made no attempt to even raise his fist at D'rok. He was stuck, clearly bested in a internal conflict of pride and self preservation.

D'rok nodded, accepting victory. He took a step towards the left of Kusovai before leaning over closer to the Sub-Commander. "I expect that you will keep your childish maw closed, Sub-Commander." Without another word, D'rok left the frozen warrior in his place and left the armory for the hangar.

D'rok made his way briskly to the hangar with a sense of satisfaction

from putting the younger Sub-Commander to shame. In the hangar, Rtas had already made it there and was informing a Phantom pilot of the coming mission. By the time that D'rok made it to Rtas' side the pilot had entered the Phantom and was warming it up for the Lance. Rtas seemed a bit on edge and also pleased that D'rok had arrived.

"You know..." Rtas looked towards D'rok with a raised eyebrow. "You don't have to join us. You are on voluntary leave."

"I wish too for I can not handle myself with nothing to do." D'rok sighed. "What is happening Rtas. What are we doing?"

Rtas nodded slightly. "Ship infiltration. The fleet has lost contact with the DSC class Infinite Succor and we are to figure out why."

"Oh..." D'rok looked back to see that Rtas' warriors were now arriving from the armory. "How high is this assignment from?"

"From the top. Straight from the Fleet Admiral." Rtas sighed.

"All the more reason for me to attend this fine mission." D'rok sighed softly.

"Very well... I will join you and the troops in the Phantom soon." Rtas waved him off.

D'rok quickly made his way down from the elevated loading platform that Rtas was standing on. He joined the Lance ranks and waited patiently for his turn to enter the gravity lift on the exposed rear of the space worthy Phantom. Before he had his chance, his in-ear communications piece crackled as Rtas connected to the Lance's network.

"Warriors..." Rtas started. "We are on a mission. The Infinite Succor has been boarded by unknown hostile forces. But we suspect the Demon is involved." He spoke as he casually joined his underlings as he spoke. "If we meet the Demon we will destroy it for the honor of the Covenant, but we must remain alert for other threats."

"We might not be equipped for a Demon!" one of the standing Majors spoke out as D'rok entered the Phantom.

"Have faith, Major. We have Special Operations Officer Tallaham joining us to help in such an occurrence. He is quite skilled as a Demon slayer." Rtas boasted slightly.

Kusovai could be heard softly snorting in defiance.

Rtas continued. "We have been given command codes for the Infinite Succor which will allow us to control all systems on the ship. Only the Legate on the board can override these codes, so we should have complete control of its systems. Assuming that he has not been compromised, Sub-Commander Kusovai will see that you all get the codes." He paused as he finally entered the Phantom. "The information on the ship and its crew are also stored in this data. Study it on the way over. We may be exiting the Phantom in a combat zone so have all weapons readied now." He stopped to grip a holding bar above him. "Pilot! We are ready for takeoff!"

The D'rok took his place on with his back against the wall towards the rear of the craft. This was his favorite place on a Phantom as he enjoyed being one of the first people off of the craft in a hot zone. He wasn't really expecting to see much combat here as communications were offset by slip-space travel frequently. With a shrug of his tense shoulders, he widened his stance just before the Phantom began to rise and move towards the hangar exit. The transport soon exited the hangar for the vacuum of space.

With the traveling underway, D'rok pulled out his data pad to look over what Rtas had on the Infinite Succor. It was a DSC "class support ship that was used solely for food supply to the fleet. On board was an entire habitation for animals to breed and thrive before being taken through the ship's processing systems before being sent off to the other ships of the fleet. The only other thing that was available in the data was that it was a Huragok and Unggoy only ship with the exception of a single San Shyuum prophet. The ship had dropped from contact several hours earlier and so Rtas' Lance was going to board the vessel and reestablish communication with the fleet. By the time he had looked over the information and briefing, the Phantom was closing in on the darkly lit Infinite Succor.

Rtas stood firmly as the Phantom entered the hangar and flipped easily around to let them out. "Alright Lance! Secure the hangar!" With that, he quickly opened the rear door for exit.

In full unison and with great anticipation, D'rok and a pair of Rtas' Majors got up and ready at the back of the Phantom with their weapons ready as they waited for the Phantom to stop moving so they could exit. In a brief moment, D'rok looked over towards the pair of Majors next to him to see they were watching him.

"Keep up, alright?" He smiled slightly to them to receive a collective nod from the two.

He nodded back to them and looked back at the inside of the hangar. The inside of it was quite damaged. There were spread out burn marks from previous small arms fire and several scorch marks from flame and explosions. Sitting in the middle of the hangar floor was a single crashed Spirit transport. It's hull had been crudely split open like much like a can opener would have crudely done so. There was no flames around the crash, which would have meant that it had been there for awhile. Below them was a flat plate to where transports would be lowered on for rearmament. With a clear location to land, D'rok gave a charge towards the exit of the Phantom before leaping off for the bulk head below.

As he landed hard against the bulkhead, he tucked his legs with the fall and angled himself into a forward motion roll that would distribute his inertia into forward motion. He took a few steps to slow down to see that the two Majors were following his lead before charging forward towards inward in the hangar. The three then lead the charge to secure the hangar as the rest of the troops quickly stormed off the Phantom.

The pilot of the Phantom spoke out onto the comms as Rtas exited the craft. "When you are ready for extraction contact me and I will return. Glorious Advance Out."

D'rok and the pair of Majors quickly made it towards the other side of the hangar. D'rok slowed them all too a stop as they had looked on both sides and forward of a quick scan of the hangar.

"Secured." The Major on the left stated.

"Secured." D'rok added from the right as he lowered to a crouch with his weapon lowered slightly as he continued to scan the surroundings.

Kusovai quickly slowed to a stop after passing between them with his sword drawn. "Secured." He said as he lowered his sword. "The hangar is ours. Use the forward doors and move to the bridge. Four by four cover pattern."

D'rok waited a moment before standing up fully to begin to move with the two Majors who accompanied him to begin with. He glanced over at them to see that their names were Noma Vallumee and Shiro Altranee respectfully. As they looked to him for some guidance, Gre'toy ran up to join them from behind. With a very quick thrown together quad, the four moved onward too follow Kusovai. The followed for only several meters before they were stopped by another Unggoy off to the side who suddenly spoke up.

"Uhhh... Commander?" The Unggoy started as he looked down one of the few main doors out of the hangar. "I found something!" he yelled excitedly.

With the sudden attention of everyone now to him, Rtas and Kusovai approached the Unggoy in question. With the commanders of the Lance interested in the find, the rest of the Lance began to filter over quickly behind them. D'rok joined the two commanders to see that the three of the warriors looked down upon a floor covered with several large splotches of faintly dried Unggoy blood that were scattered nearby the door opening and it's door panel.

"At least eight Unggoy died here and were dragged through this door." Kusovai pointed out clearly with a count with a quick inspection.

"I was not aware that the Humans were so interested in the dead." Rtas tilted his head. "Maybe they are barbaric enough to eat our dead."

D'rok looked passed them to notice that with each splotch, there was very only faint dragging streaks of blood, meaning that they bodies had been left for quite some time before being moved. "No... they are not..." he pointed out quickly.

Kusovai scoffed softly. "You are so sure, Tallaham?"

D'rok shifted his weight in thought of what would have drug the bodies from their place of demise. "Very..." he answered quite tautly as he was quite bewildered. He was in such grave concern over the possibilities that he completely the scolding look that Kusovai.

Rtas stood at D'rok's defense. "He is the Human expert here, Sub-Commander. He may be correct." He paused to wave the rest of the Lance closer "Either way..." He hummed in mutual concern. "These tracks would be the clearest sign of Human activity. We will follow

these tracks until we catch up with who made them."

D'rok grimaced at Rtas' words and shouldered his weapon as he dispelled his crazy science fiction thoughts that he was trying to place; if only he could remember.

Rtas and Kusovai, with this new development, now began to lead the Lance into the bloodied pathway. Everyone was very obviously becoming on edge as they all looked around from floor to ceiling as they headed off down the hallway. Their path towards the bridge of the Infinite Succor was going to lead straight to the animal preserve, which was where all the wildlife of the ship was held. They would have to find more there. Eventually, they turned around a corner to find several piles complexly unrecognizable of fluorescent blue and purplish gore laying before a locked door that would open up to the hunting preserve. Several of the warriors in the lance covered their faces and noses from the nearly stifling smell. Kusovai motioned for the group to stop before he and Rtas moved forward to inspect it.

Altranee coughed behind D'rok. "Gods!" he gagged once again as the smell filled his nostrils.

"This is... Huragok blood." Kusovai grumbled to Rtas.

Rtas stood there silently in thought for a second. "So Tallaham was right... This does not look like Human attack. Barbaric as they are, I have never seen them do something like this."

D'rok took a few breaths through his nose to take in the smell. He had seen enough combat and war to smell what fried and blown up Huragok was like; he could very obviously catch that, yet there was something else that was lingering heavily over the Huragok stench. It was quite rancid against his nasal palette, it was very similar to the smell of very rotten meat. Whatever it was, it churned his already nervous stomach. The smell was not helped by the paranoia from the fact that the door after the Huragoks was locked. Humans would have never locked the door so that only left two possibilities: The Unggoy of the ship locked the Huragoks out, or the Huragoks tried to seal the doors in fear of something getting into this section of the ship. D'rok knew Unggoy well enough to figure it was quite possibly the latter. But what could make a group of Huragoks so stricken with fear that they would give themselves by sealing such an important door?

Unable to handle the smell any further, Rtas opened the poorly sealed door to reveal a brightly illuminated open room of color. Kusovai and Rtas quickly lead the Lance out of the putrid scene out into the opening of grass that lay between the door and the forest ahead. Everyone quickly got clear of the hallway and tried to quickly catch a half decent breath of fresh air. To much their surprise, even the preserve's air was tainted by the heavy lingering of rotten flesh.

It was about now that D'rok noticed that for the exception of the pants and soft coughs that the Lance gave from the previous smell, the ship was dead silent. Not only was it unsettling to find that this large preserve was void of any sound, he also realized the hangar and the path to this point was silent and dead. The only life on the ship he had seen heard or felt was that of the Lance's

warriors. Despite the hast to clear their lungs of the filth, D'rok stayed quite alert with his Carbine raised as he scanned the dense forest. Something about it was visually off; the plant life seemed tainted somehow.

Kusovai stepped forward "This dome is a hunting preserve." He cringed in disgust as he stood tall in front of the group. "That is strange..." He muttered as he looked down slightly. "It should be teeming with animals..."

"I'm not getting anything on my scanners, Commander." An Unggoy near Kusovai said as he checked his extended range function on his data pad. "No animal life on sensor-" He stopped suddenly as he panted excitedly. "Wait... One life form. Four hundred meters ahead. Large."

Rtas snapped up at the detection, now fully alert. "Sub-Commander. Take the first squad and the Unggoy and loop around the right flank; Squad two and I will hit it from the front. If the target is identified as hostile. Eliminate it."

As Rtas had ordered, Kusovai quickly took a good portion of the Lance with him as they entered the forest off to the left to try to get around the side of whatever was setting the reading off. D'rok moved close to Rtas as he deeply inspected the forest for any movement that could be seen. He couldn't help the fact that his hearts were racing frantically. Something wasn't right here and he could sense it. Plagued by his nervousness, his knuckles were turning lighter in color from how tight his grip was on his weapon.

All of a sudden a mid sized bipedal creature wandered into view in the trees in front of Rtas and his group. The creature must have been somewhere around twice the size of a grunt and it resembled something that might be a bastardization of a Jiralhanae hybrid of some Frankenstein mix. To much of their surprise, the gray furred creature had many very unnaturally formed limbs protruding from its side and back. The creature was also very bloodies and discolored even in it's own hide; this was entirely new to anything D'rok had ever seen before.

Rtas quietly leaned over to D'rok slightly as they watched the creature "Its reading as some sort of parasitic infestation. It is not matching up with anything in our database."

D'rok swallowed dryly "Fantastic..."

Rtas put his finger up to his communication piece briefly. "The Humans are not responsible for this."

"Commander!" Kusovai responded rather quickly. "More creatures incoming; Smaller, but lots of them!"

Rtas growled. "Stand ready, hold fire." Rtas told the warriors of the lance as he slowly leveled his weapon at the beast.

Hardly a second later, several creatures, each with their own mutation spins from each other, joined the first in the trees. The creatures clearly had caught wind of the Lance as they mostly all turned their nearly demonic gaze at towards D'rok and Rtas. With a hellish snarl, several of the beasts let out a growing horde of

unnatural roars as they began to swiftly charge at their new prey.

16. Act03 Ch03 DNR 2 (Do Not Resuscitate)

SGTLEGENDKILLED~

Fate Continuum

Act III

Chapter III

"D.N.R. (Do Not Resuscitate) II"

It was a mystery at who had actually fired their weapon first. It might have been the nervous finger of a frightened Special Operations Minor or it may even had been the direct action of Rtas as the creatures began their swift charge at the Lance. This was a question that needed no answer, as it caused the Lance as an entirety to immediately join one another as they began to unload their weapons at the charging creatures. A nearly solid wave of all sorts of projectiles was thrown at the creatures; everything from the rapid zips of D'rok's automatic Carbine to entire volleys of Fuel Rods emptied from the magazines of the Unggoy carried cannons. Unfortunately, despite the amount of fire sent at them, only a handful of the creatures fell sliding to the ground from death. The ones that did fall victim of the weapons seemed to instantly be replaced. The creatures advance was so swift that the Lance hardly had time to take a step or two back before the first of the them lunged at the warriors.

Rtas had dropped his plasma rifle in favor of his energy sword just as the creatures reached the group. With sword in hand, he began to hack and slash at any and all of the creatures that had closed into his sword's range. The rest of the Lance shifted their tactics accordingly; those with swords used them, and those who didn't did their best to stay grouped together to consolidate fire at the creatures. Despite the quick shift in pace, those with weapons lighter than fuel rod cannons were at a clear disadvantage as the creatures seemed to simply soak up the plasma.

D'rok's Carbine beeped and ejected the ammo canisters over his shoulders. He yelled out of panic as he began to backpedal as he quickly snapped a conjoined canister pair into the magazine well of the Carbine. As the Carbine accepted the canisters, he looked up just in time to duck under the jagged appendage of one of the creatures. He quickly jumped back from the creature as it took another swipe at him. The swipe was low and swift as it tried to counteract against D'rok's low dodge of the first. Instead of getting him, it caught his Carbine and took it from his hands. With his main weapon taken from his clutch, he swiftly tightened his fists and activated his wrist mounted Energy dagger. The creature took another swipe at him and somehow missed him yet again.

With the greatest swiftness he could, D'rok moved with the creature as it tried for a third swipe against him. The creature's swing was wide and brisk, leaving a small opening for D'rok to take as it set it self slightly off balance from the lack of contact. With a grunt,

D'rok tightened his fist as he swung the blade effectively through the creature's arm. The creature seemed very little effected by the limb loss and was quick to recover enough to swipe at D'rok with its other arm.. Before it could, he sent his still tightly balled fist into the side of the creature's skull, sinking the blade into it's brain cavity. To much his surprise, the flesh of the creature had a disgusting amount of softness and give to it. There was so much give to the flesh that his heavy strike actually removed its head completely from its body. The now headless creature stumbled and began to fall to the side from the decapitation.

To much of D'rok's dismay, the creature miraculously stood back up as if entirely unhindered from injury. The creature recovered only to face him with a deep, gore-filled crater between its shoulders. D'rok tensed up while the creature gurgled viciously as spurts of bright yellow gore and fluid sprayed from the opening. Before the creature could strike again, the glorious blade of Rtas swiftly tore through the creature's midsection; the disgusting beast finally met its demise as it fell to the grass in pieces.

D'rok took a step back with weak knees from the encounter; his stomach churned heavily in the pit of his belly as he gagged. The previous combined sight of the beheaded creature, its spurting fountain of gore, and mixed with the smell was just enough to meet his very tolerant threshold.. Unwillingly he gave in to his bodily responses and began to purge his belly of all of its contents onto the ground before him.

He groaned deeply as he regained some of his posture before he wipes his maw with his clean hand. With a cleaner mouth he looked up to see Rtas slicing through one of the few final creatures that had attacked them. The off to the side, Kusovai was doing the same as several of the Sangheili of the Lance were moping up the rest of the creatures who had gotten distracted by eating the Unggoy alive. D'rok forced himself upright and quickly tried to flick the gore from his hand before he retrieved his Carbine. Once he had become reacquainted with his weapon, he looked around to see that somehow they had defeated the horde with only a pair of Sangheili and several Unggoy casualties.

"By the Prophets!" Rtas lowered his blade and looked around quickly for more, clearly quite frantic from the encounter.

"Rtas!" D'rok groaned out weakly as he nearly tripped over one of the mutated corpses.

"D'rok! Are you alright?!" Rtas quickly moved closer to D'rok's side while looking around cautiously.

"I'll be fine..." D'rok lied slightly.

"Do you think we have beaten them?"

"No... There must be more in the forest waiting..." D'rok answered as he shook his head.

"I share the mutual feeling." He turned and made his way to Kusovai. "Warriors!" Rtas began as he rejoined with Kusovai's team. "Go to energy blades! They are the most effective weapons. Unggoy, stay behind the Sangheili and give covering fire! Stay out of



reach."

Kusovai visibly grimaced at the corpses. "What are they, Commander?"

Rtas seemed to ignore this question. "They can be killed; they attacked the Covenant. These facts combined make our course clear: We will continue to the back of the ship. Sub-Commander, Take the rear. Unggoy middle position."

Rtas took a quick count of his remaining soldiers before he began to lead them down a trampled down path that seemed to go in the direction of the bridge. As the group began to filter away, D'rok looked down around at the carnage briefly to see who had fallen from the attack. Before he turned to leave, he quickly took an inactivated energy sword off of one of the now deceased Sangheili in the grass. He now found himself in disgruntled annoyance that he had not brought his sword with him; even though that blades were hardly his forte, it clearly would have been useful here. With a sword now on his person, he felt a bit more at ease as he now had something that had shown to be effective against whatever the ghastly creatures had been. He swapped his Plasma rifle to the magnetic pad on his other hip before putting the sword in the sidearm's original place. He quickly drew his Assault Carbine and took up the rear of the group.

It might have not been the best idea to continue on into the preserve's forest, but there probably was not much that the Lance could do. They had to make it to the Infinite Succor's bridge in order to see what had happened; they had their mission that was of the utmost importance. The entire Lance was heavily stricken with paranoia as they ventured cautiously through the forested path. With their weapons leveling in every direction, it was unlikely that the creatures would surprise the group should they attack again. Despite the fact that they were now more ready for an attack than they were at first, the fear factor was hardly dispelled as they pressed on. Soon another entrance way of the preserve came into view. The Lance quickly would find out that this entrance was not suitable for passage; a large gathering of the creatures had begun to almost pour out of the entrance. Several of the creatures charged directly at the Lance while others stayed static in the doorway as they held what were quite obviously weapons at the group.

"Commander! This path is cut off!" Major Vallumee screamed from the front of the group as several Plasma bolts grazed over the warriors.

Major Altranee shrieked as he raised his Plasma Rifle "What are these things?!" As soon as he spoke, the large round from a Human anti-material rifle tore through his entire skull from front to back, forcing gore to explode behind the Sangheili.

The loud thunderclap of the sniper rifle caused the entire Lance to nearly duck consecutively as the Sangheili fell. The group turned and began to run in the opposite direction of the entry way. Their rushing flee was no small task of course, as the warriors had to sprint and dodge around and between the dense forest vegetation.

"We are all going to die!" One of the Unggoy screamed.

Rtas panted softly over the comms as he lead the Lance through the

trees "Fall back! Our new objective is the bridge!" It was slightly redundant to go along the same orders as before, but what Rtas really meant in short and in Human terms: was 'get the fuck away from here!'

The creatures gave swift pursuit of the Lance as they fled through the preserve's forest. As they ran, several of the warriors did their best to fire back at the creatures who were hot on their heels. As to be expected, the weapons did little to slow the monstrous forms and so several more of the diminishing Unggoy fell victim to the creatures. D'rok who lead the charge through the trees, had slipped into self preservation mode as he dodged and weaved between the trees as fast as his hooves would carry him. Soon, after several long and desperately long moments of full out sprinting, another entrance came into view ahead. This one was luckily free of any of those creatures and was quickly deemed as a safe haven in the mind of D'rok.

Once D'rok made it to the door, he slid quickly on his hooves as he turned around with his Carbine. If he was going to be of any good to the rest of them, he would try to provide covering fire for the rest of the Lance as they rushed towards the door. He hadn't gained all that much ground from the rest of the warriors, and so they were not far from the large doorway. With his Carbine raised, D'rok quickly began plugging rounds at the mutation who were hot on their heels. D'rok had gotten very well acquainted with the Type-51 series during the ship time in the armory and found it to be quite the accurate weapon, even when he was unloading the weapon at a higher rate of fire than the set automatic setting. Given this experience, he had no problem hitting the frantically moving mutant creatures. His aim only started to be a bit effected as he was starting to notice some of the creatures seemed to have parts of them that closely resembled Human.

Rtas made it too the door only to stop before it as he turned to slice at the creatures to buy the Lance some time. "Fall back through the door!" He screamed at Kusovai as the rest of the Lance fled towards the doorway. "Sub-Commander, lock it down with the command codes!"

Kusovai and several warriors joined D'rok in the doorway, all turning their weapons to fire around Rtas' flanks as Kusovai hastily entered the code into the doorway. The doors began to close as the Commander quickly made his way back to the Lance. Rtas slipped in with the group as the heavy doors reached the halfway point of closing and watched as his warriors unloaded their condensed fire into the approaching creatures. The warriors heavy wall of projectiles was proving to be somewhat effective against the horde. The only issue was the very poorly fired shot in return from the Covenant and Human weapons that the horde had come by. Despite the occasional bullet or plasma bolt bounding off of the edge of the door, the door was well covered by the warriors. Unfortunately for the warriors, one of the creatures had fired a plasma bolt through the door that hit an Unggoy that had just primed a grenade in the face. The Unggoy dropped the active grenade to the floor as he instinctively clutched frantically at his head as his mask and head were receiving major burns.

"Grenade!" a nearby Unggoy screamed just before the explosive detonated, causing several Unggoy and a pair of Sangheili to meet an explosive demise.

The rest of the warriors of the Lance struggled to continue firing as their comrade's limbs were thrown about and their flesh sprayed from the grenade. Despite the new purple coating that several of the Lance members had, they fired their weapons frantically until the heavy doors tightly closed. As the door closed forcefully, several of the creatures were caught between the two door halves, their bodies and limbs snapping as the metal closed together. The limbs and remnants of the creatures fell to the floor where they twitched in vain as they died off as the rest of their now blocked off horde viciously beat against the door. The sounds were muffled from the door, leaving the Lance to stand briefly in shock of what had transpired.

Rtas broke the silence with a very serious tone. "Lock down every door between here and the bridge after we pass" He ordered as he turned from the closed door and started off down the hall towards the Infinite Succor's bridge.

As the Lance traversed the ship, Kusovai quickly shut and sealed every door that the Lance passed through. Although it would slow them down, the process would hopefully buy them some time before the creatures found an alternative route around the doors. Several of the warriors attempted to clean their armor of the blood while they followed Rtas' lead down the hallway; D'rok was not one of these warriors. For as morbid of a thought as it was, he was somewhat comforted that he was covered in gore that he could at least fully identify.

Soon the Lance arrived to the bridge of the ship. To much of their surprise, the bridge was entirely void of any traces of life; the controls and consoles of the ship were warm and active as they sit awaiting command. Rtas ordered Kusovai and a pair of Majors to the controls of the ship. D'rok stood back with the others and looked over the rest of the warriors. They had now lost about half of their men, which would leave the group with about half a dozen of Sangheili and four Unggoy. He was pleased to see that Gre'toy was among the living; Gre'toy was quite alive and decently well as he ditched his nearly empty Fuel Rod cannon for his trophy MA5B on his back.

"Warn the fleet and have them prepare to destroy this ship on my command." Rtas commanded the others at the consoles. "Bring the self-destruct system online."

Kusovai looked grimly down at the console before him. He attempted to connect to the fleet. "Commander. Radio communications are offline."

Vallumee spoke out suddenly as he stopped pressing buttons distraught "The self-destruct system is not activation!"

Rtas turned to Kusovai "Use the command codes."

"I did" Kusovai softly answered.

"As did I" Vallumee answered from across the board.

Rtas growled as he turned back to the main console. "That means the Legate has-" Rtas was cut off as the main screen of the room turned on to show the Prophet of Etiology.

"That is because I have disabled all primary systems on board the Infinite Succor." The San Shyuum answered Rtas' suspicions.

Rtas huffed softly as he tried to be polite despite the current situation. "Legate. Please re-enable self-destruct so we may eliminate this infestation."

"I will not, Commander." the Prophet folded his hands on his lap before him.

"Legate." Rtas visibly twitched. "We can not save this ship. It must be destroyed if our enemy is to be defeated." he spoke firm and abrasive in annoyance towards the Prophet.

"On that we agree, Commander." The Prophet smiled slightly. "But how can I trust you are not infected yourself? If I open up one system you may be able to reach the other systems such as the slip-space controls." he paused as he pressed his finger tips together. "The Flood cannot be allowed to escape, and you may be assisting it. I did not have accurate information on how quickly the Flood spreads. Thus you and your men are suspect."

"We are not infected with this... Flood, Legate." A growl escaped Rtas' mouth.

"While in another circumstance I would take your word for this Commander. I cannot now." The Legate paused with a hum. "Head to the medical bay where I can examine you remotely. If you are free from infection then I will meet with you."

Rtas suddenly slammed his fist down onto the console in frustration. "We do not have time for this Legate!" He yelled. "I have lost several men, we are low on ammunition, and-" Rtas was cut off once again, although this time it was not by the Legate, but rather the loud bellowing wailing of the creatures.

The group turned suddenly see several of the creatures approaching from the direction of the hall. The creatures, always surprising in their forms, were led by an armored form; a clearly mutated Sangheili. From the armor it was very clearly a warrior from Rtas' Lance. The warrior was very much not himself and in fact one of the creatures. One of the very clairvoyant signs was the fact that he had been mutated so that his head was now forced backwards behind his torso, the neck clearly being broken in the process. Yet another milestone in disgust that the parasite had managed to achieve.

Of the entire group, D'rok was nearly the most started by it due to his hyperactive paranoia "Damn it!" he yelled as he snapped up his Carbine and began firing at the infected Sangheili.

Yet another surprise was immediately apparent, the parasite was not only using their old comrade's body, but it was also utilizing the systems within his armor. It took several more shots than it had before to take the others down because D'rok had to cut through the shields first unaided by the stunned Lance.

Rtas shook himself slightly as he watched the situation unfold swiftly before him. "He is no longer our comrade, but our enemy!" He yelled loudly, breaking his warriors of their shock. "For his glory! Soldiers of the Covenant attack!"

In a flurry of sudden organization, the rest of the Lance joined D'rok in the act of firing on the creatures as they quickly began to enter the bridge. The creatures, like before, had begun to mass themselves as a horde as they literally poured through the doorway into the bridge. This repeated tactic quickly led Rtas to jump to a rash decision.

"Fall back through the other door and to medical!" he yelled just before sliding his sword through a mutated form that had gotten too close. "Unggoy! Destroy the bridge! We cannot let them access the ship's controls!"

With their new given orders, the Unggoy began to take their explosive charges they had been equipped with before throwing them around the bridge near the consoles that controlled the ships. They quickly completed the task with the covering aid of the Sangheili warriors. Once the charges had been tossed to where they needed to be, the Lance turned and fled quickly out another entrance to the bridge. As soon as they were out of the room the charges were set off, leaving them to destroy creature and console alike.

"Were you not locking those doors behind us, Sub-commander?!" Rtas shouted at Kusovai as the Lance scrambled down the hall as fast as they could.

"I was, Commander!" Kusovai frantically answered as he panted in with fear.

"Then they have our command codes!" Rtas growled in realization. "We need to find the Legate!"

The group continued on their fleeing path towards the medical bay of the ship. Yet again they were being followed by the hungry horde that seemed to have no issue keeping up with the Lance. They would not last long with this running tactic; they needed a blockade to slow the creatures somehow. Rtas quickly found something that would prove useful of this necessity.

"There is a plasma battery up ahead!" Rtas pointed out loudly before he began to slow down. "Kusovai! Take the men to the other side of the battery and put at least five doors between you and it! Then meet me in medical in five minutes!" He slowed to a stop in the room with the plasma battery he mentioned.

"Understood!" Kusovai motioned in agreement before leading the rest of the Lance off.

D'rok, defying orders as always, skipped to a stop besides Rtas before turning his weapon back in the direction in which they came. "I will cover you, Commander!" he yelled as he did all he could to create a bit of a resistance down the hall at the quickly advancing creatures.

Rtas gave no objections to some help. "Very well!" he frantically worked as quick as his fingers could work.

"Warning. Plasma cannon charge reaching dangerous levels." The speakers of the console Rtas was at called out suddenly. "Safety protocols over-ridden. Plasma overload imminent."

"This is our time to leave!" Rtas shouted as he informed D'rok before he began to run.

"Oh..." D'rok turned and sprinted after Rtas. "What did you do!?" D'rok asked as several alarms rang out.

"I forced the battery into an overloaded state!" Rtas answered back to D'rok.

D'rok grunted in acknowledgment as the two rounded a corner. They had barely made it through the next series of rooms before a large explosion roared out from behind them. The rumbling explosion was followed by a loud wail of the horde of mutants as they perished in the rapid flames of the ruptured battery. Despite the warm feeling knowing that yet another large amount of the mutants had fallen, they knew it would not come without cost.

"Hull breach in blue deck. Vacuum containment protocols in effect." The Infinite Succor's overhead speakers called out as air began to rush against D'rok and Rtas' forward motion as the battery chamber far behind them began to swiftly depressurize.

The reversing force of the climate shift gave quite a push against the two warriors and while it didn't stop them, it slowed them to a near walking pace. This didn't last for very long however as the ship's stabilization systems began to close off several doors that would stop the entire section of the ship from depressurizing. Doors behind them closed, sealing tightly as they prevented both the oxygen loss and any mutant creatures off of pursuit of the two. With now but a steady run before them, the pair continued sprinting towards the medical labs. The two made it there eventually and were surprised to find themselves at the gun points of the many guns of the Lance who had been waiting with weapons raised.

"Commander, are you two infected?" Kusovai asked as he glared passed his Plasma rifle that was aimed at D'rok's chest.

"No, Sub-Commander. Are you?" Rtas growled back with a soft pant of annoyance.

"No, Commander."

Good." He stood up straight and headed between the parting group into medical; as he walked between the Lance they quickly lowered their weapons.. "The Legate has some access to the ship's systems, so use the diagnostic units to scan yourselves and enter it into the ship's computer so he can see the results."

"We stopped at the ship's weapons locker on the way commander." Kusovai informed Rtas as the Lance entered medical cautiously while approaching the medical bay's full body scanners.

"Excellent, Sub-Commander." Rtas rumbled as he watched as the other warriors scanned their biologic status into the terminal.

It didn't take that long to have everyone to finish scanning themselves into the terminal as each scan only took but a few seconds. D'rok and Rtas let everyone else scan themselves first before putting joining them in the process. To hardly anyone's

surprise, no one was infected, and so Rtas quickly sent off the results to the prophet.

"It seems the plasma turret overload has shorted out some of our equipment..." Major Vallumee growled off to the side "Including our radios."

"We will have to summon back the Phantom visually then." Rtas grimaced at the new found difficulty of the situation. "That also cuts us off completely from the fleet."

"Indeed, Commander." Major Vallumee nodded in agreement.

With the results now sent off, Rtas used the nearby terminal to open up a connection to the prophet once again. "Legate. As you can see, we are not infected." he spoke quickly with the slight hint of annoyance.

The Prophet accepted the answer with satisfaction "Yes. I can see that. Go to the primary hydroponics chamber one deck down. I will contact you there." He paused. "And make sure the Flood does not follow you here." He then ended the connection nearly before he finished speaking.

"I grow tired of this hunt." Rtas growled as he sagged his shoulders at the terminal.

D'rok huffed softly "Welcome to the game of politics, Rtas..."

Rtas hummed quietly with a slight smile before standing up and turning to his Lance. "We are going one floor down using the grav-lift down the hall. Sub-Commander, take rear."

With a quick nod, Kusovai did as he was told and began to lead the lance out of the medical bay. D'rok followed the group in the rear with Rtas as they quickly made their way to the gravity lift. The Lance made quite the haste to all get on the large gravity lift that they would take down to the floor below. The warriors were bathed in silence, the only clear sound that was heard over the soft noise of the lift as they slowly descended was their breathing. Eventually the lift came to a stop on the floor below and the group, not wanting to overstay their welcome, quickly departed from it in search of the location the Prophet spoke of.

Even with the group looking around diligently throughout the lift room and the nearby Hydroponics room, they found no traces of the Prophet. Rtas seemed like he was just about to call the search off before a loud rush of air hissed from a nearby wall. The noise, while making the warriors all collectively jump in sudden fright, gave only but a clear direction to the prophet as a segment of the wall slid open to reveal a hidden room. The group quickly moved towards it to quickly discover that the prophet sat waiting smugly in his floating throne as he waved them in.

"Excellent, Commander. Please enter." The prophet waved them in quickly. "Do hurry and close the door. Don't want to give away our location."

With his words, the Lance quickly shuffled into the small room with him. As soon as the last warrior had entered the room, the door was

swiftly closed and sealed by Kusovai. Rtas quickly made his way over to the Prophet's side as the rest of his Lance stood looking around quietly in the dim lit room as they desperately tried to ease themselves from the threat of the mutants.

"Lacking a full security complement I had this installed in case we were boarded. None of the crew knows about it, which is especially valuable now." The Prophet explained to Rtas as he looked at a wall of separate screens in front of him.

"What is happening, Legate? What are these creatures?" Rtas asked quietly as he watched the screens. The fact that they were the only things in the room making any form of illumination didn't help the warriors from watching over the Prophet's shoulders from afar.

"I see you never studied, Commander..." The Prophet started calmly. "They are the 'Flood.' One of the many tests and obstacles we must pass to activate the holy rings and begin the Great Journey. They are mentioned in several of our religious texts, but the details are woefully inadequate given current circumstances. They arrived in one of our drop ships from Halo, but managed to destroy it in their rather crude attempt at landing here. They are now trapped here on the Infinite Succor." The Prophet paused as he flicked through several camera angles showing more disgusting hordes of the 'Flood.' "As soon as the boarding alarm was sounded I locked down the primary systems and came here to await reinforcements. Unfortunately, I feel now retaking the ship is not an effective course of action. The Flood infects any living or dead animal tissue they come into contact with, taking control of an infected creature. The infection process also makes these creatures very resilient. In the last half hour since they consumed your comrade, their behavior has changed dramatically. They have frown far more organized and shunted the atmosphere from some areas of the ship to create a defensive perimeter around engineering and the primary cargo hold in the rear of the ship." he paused to sigh as he sat back in his chair. "In addition, they have set up patrol throughout the Infinite Succor. This us seems they also absolve the knowledge of those they infect. Now that they have destroyed the bridge. The Flood have sent guards in engineering- I believe they plan on using the slip space drive to flee this system... and engineering is the only place they can activate it from. They have already absorbed the pilot, so they know how to plot a slip space course. Using the command codes your underling know they have begun trying to bypass my security lockout, and I have no doubt they will succeed in less than an hour." The long-winded Prophet paused yet again to switch screens. This time one of the screens showed a bulbous mass of flesh that was being formed from a melting pot of the mutants and dead bodies in a corner of a room within the ship.

D'rok felt his stomach lurch as he covered his mouth with his cleaner hand as he turned away as his belly heaved harshly.

"This creature they are believe serves as their leader and organizer..." The Prophet speculated They keep bringing it corpses and other flesh and it has been growing quickly by absorbing them." he stopped now for a longer pause as he turned to Rtas. "So Commander... How are you going to get me safely off this ship and then destroy the Flood?"

Rtas, having a whole new mass of information dropped onto his



shoulders, stared down at the floor silently. His eyes darted around and his mandibles twitched slightly as he seemed to be deeply in thought.

"Commander?" The Prophet pried further.

"Can you pressure the vacuum areas, Legate?" Rtas asked suddenly as he looked up from the floor.

"Not from this location." The Prophet sighed. "I only gave minimal access from here and the bridge controls are destroyed."

Rtas considered this quickly as he leaned closer to the screens. "Do you have any vacuum suits on board for Sangheili?"

"No. We had no Sangheili in our crew, and so no suits for them..."

Rtas stood from the screens with a stern grunt. "Major Vallumee!" He started as he turned firmly to the Major. "Take three Sangheili and the Unggoy and escort the Legate to the hangar. Signal the Glorious Advance using plasma grenades. Wait five minutes. If I have not arrived by then, leave and radio the fleet to destroy the ship immediately." Rtas paused as he visibly swallowed his feelings down. "I will take the remaining four Sangheili and head down to engineering. Once there, we will activate the slip space drive with a course plotted into the sun. That should eliminate the threat."

Unfortunately, the Prophet didn't seem to keen on this plan of action. "Commander! I must protest! There is no point in going to engineering-" The Prophet stammered as he tried to now figure out a plan to out-do Rtas' plans. "We can escape this ship and have the fleet destroy it remotely! Also, splitting your forces in hostile territory seems like a bad move. Considering you are responsible for my safety, which should be your foremost concern after destroying the ship. I am the Minister of Etiology after all!"

Rtas stiffened as a furious growl escaped his throat. "Legate!" Rtas yelled as he slammed his fist into the Prophet's computer and turned his chair so that the San Shyuum was facing him. "It will take five minutes to reach the hangar, five to board the Phantom due to our lack of radio comms, and another fifteen to get the fleet into firing position with the proper authorization in place!" Rtas continued on as he began to loose himself in anger. "Now you will be quiet and let my men do their duty! Out prime concern is the safety of the Covenant! Not you!"

D'rok, who had been watching the situation quickly unfold, tightened his grip on his carbine; he had never seen Rtas this upset.

Rtas, not giving quite enough, flat out snarled in the Prophet's face. "It would be a simple matter to make it appear you died in the Flood attack! Now give me your command codes!"

The Prophet simple stammered in fear. "I will not! How dare yo-"

Rtas abruptly cut the prophet off mid sentence as he took a firm hold of the frail San Shyuum and lifted him from his floating throne. In a

full out snap of rage, Rtas lifted the screaming Prophet above his head before violently throwing the Prophet against the metal bulkhead. As the Prophet's body hit the floor, several audible snaps and crunches rang out as many of his bones and vital organs broken and became useless from the force of collision.

The Lance stood speechless at what they had just witnessed. As radical of an action that was carried out, none of them would dare raise a question to their devoted and distraught Commander. And so they stood quietly and watched as Rtas stood over the now dead San Shyuum, his chest heaving heavily from his enraged breathing.

It wasn't until almost half a minute later before D'rok broke the silence of the group. "Are you alright, brother?" D'rok asked quietly and with great concern.

Rtas clenched his fist and shivered slightly as he quickly cast out his anger. "I am much better. Now lets get moving." Clearly he wanted to not talk about what had just happened, so he quickly turned to the door and open the door for the group.

With hardly a word in response to the violent outbreak, three of the Sangheili nominated themselves to lead the Unggoy to where they would attempt to contact the Phantom back to the fleet. The Lance collectively headed back to the gravitational lifts out of the hydroponics room. Rtas and the four following Sangheili stepped onto one of the two directional lifts and the rest of the Lance got onto the other. D'rok glanced over to see Major Vallumee give a respectable nod to Rtas' now small group of warriors as the two lifts separated from the current floor.

The ride down the lift was stressful. There was a lot resting on the Sangheili warriors; if they failed the Lance and the ship would be lost to the parasitic Flood. The lift didn't drop very far before it rested carefully on the engineering level of the ship. Despite that the lift chamber was free of any hostile forces, the rumbling sound of the parasite could be heard beyond the closed entrance to the room. The five warriors stepped off of the lift quietly as they readied themselves for a fight. D'rok placed his Carbine on his back and pulled out the sword acquired from the dead Major earlier. As much as he would love to keep using his weapon, we had used most of the ammo cartridges he had brought with him on these mutants. Whether he liked it or not, he would have to get out of his comfort zone and use the blade.

As soon as everyone was ready, Rtas motioned the warriors to the door before opening it. As the door opened, the horde inside turned to the group and began their now staple wail of insolence. Before the creatures could begin to charge, Rtas boldly lead the group in a rush at the mutants. The Sangheili swiftly began the motion of slicing and swiping through the creatures. It was a messy fight that seemed to be happening very fast. D'rok hardly was able to keep track of the other warriors as he ducked and dodge the many limbs of the mutants. Gradually, the horde dwindled as they were sliced apart and left on the floor dead. Unfortunately for the group, not everyone of the Sangheili would survive this engagement.

D'rok had been busy with an effective swipe that destroyed two of the mutant forms and he heard the thundering boom of a Human shotgun being fired off right next to him. He had a chance to look over to

see the nearest Major besides him take a step back as one of the mutants fired at him nearly point blank with a Human M90 shotgun. His shields gave under the heavy weapon's blast before the creature awkwardly pumped the action of the weapon and fired again. The Major's chest was burst open from the second blast and he was shoved backwards to the floor as he fell lifeless to the floor. Once the Major had been killed off, the shotgun wielding parasite form took aim at D'rok as he was the next nearest target.

By this point there were only a few of these parasites left, and so without any regards for anyone else, D'rok swiftly charged the foe with great assertion. Luckily enough, D'rok was able to get his hand on the end of the weapon to shove the barrel away from his direction just before it went off. Ignoring his now violently ringing ears, he plunged his sword through the parasite form's torso. With a forceful twist of the wrist, D'rok snapped the sword sideways and removed the blade from the parasite, effectively killing it as he split its torso in half.

D'rok stood from the kill to find Rtas and Kusovai hacking the last of this horde of parasitic forms. Once the last had been slain, the room was near silent, the only sounds that were heard was the breathing of the warriors. Rtas nodded in grace before going over to the fallen Major and saying a prayer. As Rtas was busy with that, D'rok put his sword away before he pried the shotgun from the parasite's hand. He brushed the dirty weapon off with his hand and inspected it to ensure it was in working order before scouting around briefly for boxes of ammunition for the weapon. Surprisingly to him, ammunition was easily found hanging from the gear of the mutated Human forms that lay now scattered throughout the room. With his ammo pouches filled with as much of the stuff he could carry, he reloaded the weapon briskly before returning to the rest of the group.

"A Human weapon?" Kusovai questioned quickly as D'rok came over.

"Yes. It should do nicely." D'rok explained simply.

Without further conversation, the warriors continued on for engineering. There wasn't much further to go before they reached their destination, however they had to stop yet again before another door on the way. Like before, the sound of a horde could be heard through the closed door, except this time the sound was louder than the first; they were due for an even bigger fight.

Rtas stopped before the door to speak. "There are significant Flood numbers beyond this door. The hallway ahead leads to engineering. We will clear a path with grenades, then use energy blades to prevent damaging any systems we may need there."

D'rok gave a nod and readied his four grenades before checking the chamber of the shotgun to make sure it was properly loaded. The other warriors readied their grenades in one hand while holding their swords in the other; they were ready as they stood before the door. D'rok shouldered his weapon and waited as Rtas carefully opened the door. With a loud wavering beep, the door slid open to reveal yet another horde of the Flood. Before the parasite forms could react, the warriors swiftly threw their grenades through the door. The grenades found mass to cling too and slightly emitted a growing electronic whine before exploding brightly, sending pieces of the

forms throughout the room. Despite the combined heat and force of explosions shaking the air and immediate area around them, the warriors quickly charged through the doors at the rest of the many forms that were heavily populated in the next series of rooms to the engineering room.

The grenades had decimated most of the Flood forms in the first room that they entered, in fact it took very little time to clear what was left of them before they rushed into the next room to face even more. The warrior's swords made short work of the parasites and for those who were not cut immediately or got too close between D'rok and the rest, the shotgun proved quite admirable against the enemy. Once they breezed through the second room, the warriors charged into the coolant monitoring room that was just before the engineering bay. The warriors were getting quite good at slaying these forms. They had been figuring out where exactly where to gut, slice, and hit the forms on the fly. They seemed to respond mostly to center mass and torso attacks; removing their heads or limbs did absolutely nothing to these parasites and so the fighting was swapped accordingly to match the opposition.

All was smooth sailing as they cleared coolant monitoring of the parasite forms until one of the forms lunged at the flank of the Major closest to D'rok. Neither of the two had seen the form as it had busted into the fray from behind a tall stack of electronics. The parasite, with its sharpened and mutated claws, cut straight through the Major's torso. By the time that D'rok has swung the barrel of his shotgun to the parasite that was carving up the Sangheili, the warrior had already fallen to the floor in a heap. With a quick trigger finger and a clear shot at the creature, D'rok let loose a blast of 8 gauge buckshot nearly point blank at the parasite. The combative form was dismembered in a disgusting mist from the impact of the round. D'rok racked the pump of the weapon to swiftly turn and fire at another combat form that had lunged at him. This combat form was stopped like the rest and was graciously one of the last in the room.

D'rok racked the weapon once again and scanned around quickly to see that there were no more of the parasite forms in the room. Kusovai and Rtas stood silently over their most recent kill as they looked around and listened for more targets. The only sounds were each of their panting and the very strained breathing of the warrior that had fallen to the combat form; somehow he failed to meet his death as soon as the creature attacked him.

"Commander. I..." The Major coughed up quite the amount of blood. "I do not wish to... become one of them."

"You will not. I will assure it." Rtas answered as he quietly made his way to the floored warrior. His swords were drawn within his tense grasp. "Though you leave this world, you will come on the Great Journey when the time comes." With the grace of his words and a perfected swing, Rtas ran his blade swiftly along the Major's torso from the head down, ensuring that no parasite would be able to use his body. "Die with honor..."

Without hardly a word, Rtas motioned for D'rok and Kusovai to continue onto the engineering room. D'rok followed the two as he swiftly filled the tube of the shotgun with shells; to their luck, there were no parasites in the engineering room. Given the chance to

do so, D'rok let the two others go towards the controls to do what they would need to do and he would attempt to seal the door close. He had a gut feeling that there was going to be more coming after them.

Rtas continued quickly on to the computer terminals and began to plot a course into the systems. He was going to send the bastard ship into the nearest sun, and from here the parasite could do nothing to stop it. Of course, as if strikingly in pure vain action, the display of the terminal before him flicked onto a connection with the prophet. Unfortunately, the Prophet had been taken by the parasite and was now very eerily mutated in unnatural ways.

"Your... Comrades..." The parasitic Prophet hissed out viciously. "Part of us. We know... they knew." The parasite huffed as if he had difficulty forming words "We have the command codes. Will soon leave." The parasite emitted a deep roaring growl. "Spread!"

Rtas smiled "You will find that difficult, Abomination." he challenged as he quickly typed on the terminal.

Unknown to D'rok and Rtas, Kusovai had began shaking and twitching quite harshly. It would have seemed that one of the parasite forms had injured him, effectively infecting him midst the combat before. He was swiftly growing mutations over his body as the two were temporarily clueless to it. What keyed them into his infection was when he began to make the same unnatural noises that the rest of the parasite forms made.

The now Flood controlled Kusovai suddenly hissed a loud bellow. "You will be with us!"

"Gods!" D'rok, who was concentrating quite vividly involved with the door, yelled as he got quite the scare at Kusovai's new tune.

D'rok had just closed the door and was typing in a different code into the lock before Kusovai had gone through his quick change. D'rok was just a split second from swinging the shotgun around at Kusovai, but his movement was stopped from the audible sound of the door unlocking next to him; Flood forms were unlocking the door to reopen it from other side. In retort to the opening door, D'rok quickly turned back to it to stamp his palm against the door controls to close it. The door stopped mid process and closed quickly. The door only began to open again before he was able to lock it. Once again he closed the door just as the cycle continued of opening and reopening the door.

At one instance of the rotation of closing the door, D'rok had looked towards the other side of the room to see that Rtas had engaged the now Flood controlled Kusovai in sword combat. It seemed as if the parasite had managed to preserve Kusovai's form with his skills of the sword from when he was living. And so, Rtas was clearly having quite the time trying to fight off the swiping opposing blade. D'rok drastically wished to help him, but he was kept busy by the near comical repetitious door play. As entertaining as the whole door situation could have been, it was growing old swiftly, and he was no longer willing to play that game.

"Enough of this!" D'rok growled loudly as he leveled the shotgun towards the door.

The door opened as it had multiple times before, this time however the awaiting Flood forms were met with the heavy blasts of a shotgun. D'rok quickly began to unload the weapon into the small massing of parasite forms. The recoil of each round barely would end before he was working the pump of the weapon to fire once again. The quick paced shots made quick work of the few forms beyond the open door. By the time the weapon was emptied of all its loaded shells, only a few flood forms remained. To handle these, D'rok quickly tossed his two grenades into the room to give himself time to reload the gun; while he may have been decent with the reloading process, it still did little to aid him in now almost skinning his thumb as he was stuffing the shells into the shotgun's loading port. He stopped with four in the tube to rack the pump and raise the weapon just in time to fire into the torso of one of the two remaining Flood forms that had survived the grenades. He then quickly dispatched the other one before rushing back to the door controls.

He quickly closed the door with the button and visually found the maintenance panel to the door. Using his energy dagger, D'rok he swiftly popped the closed panel opened. With the determination of a madman, he stuffed his hand in there before gripping as many wires as he could get a hold out before tearing them out of the panel with his bare hands. The door sounded a slowing whine as it was rendered offline; its motors and power lines had been cut off from the door. D'rok threw the wires aside as he turned to see Kusovai's blade get run up the side of Rtas' helmet; the blade quite easily removed both of Rtas' left mandibles and a section of his helmet as it skimmed just above the rest of his face.

Rtas bellowed in pain fueled rage as he snapped his sword up as he completely took Kusovai's sword arm off at the shoulder. "Though you leave this world!" He growled determined as he recoiled yet again and drove his sword straight into the parasitic rendition of Kusovai "You will come on the Great Journey when the time comes!" And then, with a holler of victory, Rtas lanced his sword upward to the ceiling as he split Kusovai's torso with ease. "Die with honor!"

Rtas lowered his gaze and his sword towards the floor. He stood quietly for several moments as he let the blood from his face and mouth drip from his panting maw. With the slight flick of his wrist, he turned his sword off before setting the hilt on his hip where it belonged. D'rok came over slowly, weapon in hand.

"Are you alright, brother?" D'rok asked as he looked around for more parasite forms.

"Ill be fine..." Rtas grumbled darkly. "Now lets us hurry, Tallaham."

Rtas turned and quickly returned to the engineering terminal that he was working with previously; he ignored his injuries with great prejudiced. He quickly began to finish the process of setting a hard coded destination for the ship. As he was putting the quick and final touches on the commands, the screen flickered once again to the parasitic Prophet.

"The Forerunners... could not defeat us..." The parasite gurgled. "What chance have you?" It challenged.

Rtas looked up with a visible snarl of defiance. "If it takes my death, so be it. You will not defeat the Covenant." He slammed his fist down, ending the call before sending the commands to the ships navigation and engines.

17. Act03 Ch04 DNR 3 (Do Not Resuscitate)

SGTLEGENDKILLED~

Fate Continuum

Act III

Chapter IV

"D.N.R. (Do Not Resuscitate) III"

"Rtas?" D'rok spoke quickly as he walked besides his lone companion, his shotgun raised as he scanned around for more of the parasite

"Yes?" Rtas answered as he held his injured side.

"You seem... strangely calm given the circumstances." D'rok pointed out as he was finding no parasitic resistance on their route.

Rtas winced with a sigh before spitting some blood out of his throat. "One of my greatest students is now at peace from an unfortunate fate... of course I am."

"Will you be alright?" D'rok spiked the question quietly.

"I will be fine... I will survive this and explaining to the crew what happened to my face."

D'rok sneered softly in vain of his currently decimated mental saneness "Commander 'Half Jaw'"

"You silence that notion immediately." Rtas shot a dark glare at D'rok

"I am just preparing you for K'an when he sees you." D'rok attempted to continue to lighten the mood.

Rtas sighed almost as if he was defeated "At this point I welcome it. I have found an adversary far worse than his childish mouth..."

D'rok sighed as the terrible quiet washed over them once again. Luckily this time it was short lived as the two finally entered the hangar that they had boarded at the start of the operation. While the two had moved cautiously and with a pace of tenseness, the sight of the Phantom that awaited them at the end of the hangar gave them quite the incentive to quicken themselves. They were quite lucky that no flood had been seen in the hangar or in pursuit of them by the time that the two quickly arrived to the gravity lift beneath the Phantom.

Their hooves barely had hit the floor of the interior of the Phantom

before Rtas practically stormed off towards the cock pit of the craft. As his yelled demands to leave the Infinite Succor rang out through the entire transport, D'rok remained still in front of all of the survivors that had made it to the transport before them. The quiet stares they all gave were of solace and of concern as they looked onto the gore covered Tallaham. Major Vallumee, being the only one of the transport to really have any motion to him, was collecting a small medical kit of his own before making his way off after Rtas. D'rok took a few steps back from the gravity lift port before turning and moving himself to the rear corner of the troop bay. He sat heavily in the closest seat against the wall to the rear of the craft. After he was seated, he got as comfortable as he could as he clutched the shotgun tightly. He quite obviously wished to not be bothered.

It wasn't before long that the Phantom's engines rumbled harshly as the transport rose further from the hangar of the Infinite Succor as it turned only to bolt swiftly from the vessel. The suddenness and severity of the acceleration caused several of the Lance to stumble. While the sudden takeoff was unusually paced for the standard protocol of Phantom pilots, with the franticness in Rtas' orders it wasn't all that surprising. Eventually the two Sangheili returned where Rtas would begin to go about to each of the survivors to make sure that they were alright. Major Vallumee instead made his quick way towards D'rok.

"How are you faring, brother?" He asked at a distance; he clearly was cautious of D'rok's current state.

D'rok shifted in his seat nervously as he tried to shake his nerves. "I do not know if I actually am, Major" He answered softly.

Major Vallumee's eye brow raised slightly at this. "Would talking about it help?"

"No" I do not think it would" D'rok spoke quietly as he looked down at the shotgun in his hands.

In his silence, he watches as the weapon quiver in his hands as he was unable to stop his arms from shivering. He had been rendered more terrified than he had ever been in his entire life. He had never experienced such fear during any combat situation; the images of what had happened to the others who had perished did nothing to help this dread further strike at his integrity. D'rok was even surprised that he had gotten off of the ship with Rtas alive.

"Will you be alright?" the Major questioned.

D'rok froze for a long moment to consider before closing his eyes. "Even I do not know"

The Major took the subtle hint and left D'rok alone to himself. Without any conversation to bother him, he grew quiet as he tried in vain to calm himself as the Phantom traversed the vacuum of space. All of his mental exercises were proving to be fruitless as his mind frantically ran over every hypothetical scenario. The most prominent was the possibility that either he or one of the other survivors were infected and caused the rest of the fleet to become infected.

The Phantom came to a sudden halt within the hangar of Seeker of



Truth; the suddenness of the stop cause D'rok to jump in slight surprise. His grip on the weapon loosened quickly after he noticed that they were back in the hanger of their origin ship. Despite the successful return home, his stomach still nervously churned. With a sharp swallow to return some moisture to his dry throat, he stood from his seat and quickly made his way towards the barley opened exit of the craft. He wanted to make his leave of the Lance as soon as possible; the combination of his paranoia and the smell of gore radiating from his covered armor was going heavily against his senses.

To please his preference, he was the first down the gravity lift and, without waiting for Rtas and the rest of the Lance, was immediately heading across the hangar to the decontamination showers. He would have not stopped his path for anyone or anything that was happening in the Hangar if it had not been for Rtas demanding that he halt. It was fairly obvious why by the time that D'rok had stopped as the Hangar officer was rapidly approaching them with a pair of his own guards.

"What has happened, Commander?!" the hangar officer asked quite abrasively as he wondered what hell the Lance had brought back.

"Worry not of it!" Rtas gave a quick attempt to wave off the officer.

"I will worry of it!" The officer squabbled as if he had been greatly offended; it was his hangar after all. "You!" He pointed suddenly at D'rok. "You cannot have that parasite weapon here!" He demanded.

D'rok, having no desire to even begin with this guy, brushed him off entirely. "Those who made this weapon are far from parasites. Leave me be."

"That weapon is not allowed on this ship and you look as if you are a contagion!"

D'rok grimaced slightly as his grip on the shotgun tightened.

"We will have none of this!" The officer had the stupid idea to reach for D'rok to snatch the shotgun.

D'rok swiftly took a step from the officer as he snapped the shotgun up to point directly at his face. "You will do well not to touch me, Officer!" D'rok growled loudly as the Officers guards readied themselves as much as they could for a fight.

"You would not dare, Tallaham." The hangar Officer challenged nervously.

"If you think for one disgusting second I won't decapitate you with this weapon then please test me!" D'rok almost shouted as he watched the Hangar Officer's face past the shaking beads on the top of the weapon. "I am out of ammunition for my other weapons and I will not go unarmed, do you understand?!" D'rok huffed frantically as he tried to stop his arms from shaking so much.

"By the Gods, leave him be!" Rtas clambered over forcefully as he

asserted dominance. "Can you not see that we have seen treacherous events? And yet you wish to harass him about something so trivial!?" Rtas continued, once again showing his anger. "D'rok! Stand down and clean yourself off. I will come get you once I figure out what is to happen next."

D'rok gave a slight wavering pant before lowering the shotgun. Without wasting another second, he quickly continued his path towards the showers as he left the Hagar Officer and his guards as they faced an enraged Rtas. Once he entered the showers after making it across the hangar whilst receiving many stares from those within, he locked the door behind himself and quickly set the shotgun and his carbine close to the shower.

He turned the hot water of the shower on and swiftly began to remove the gore filled armor. With every piece that he hastily removed, he tossed it heavily into the shower so that the already steaming water would clean each piece of the filth that had covered it entirely. Filth might not be quite the word to use for it, but what else could be used? What they had faced on this day was not known. Of course there was quite a decent amount of the splatter and gore on the armor was from the fallen members of the Lance, but could they even be considered themselves after what had happened to them? D'rok didn't want to think about the line of friend or foe after experiencing what had transpired. Once he had put the shotgun shells next to the weapon and his armor was all thrown aside, he peeled his skin suit off before inspecting it for any invasive ruptures or openings in the protective layers of the suit. This was for his own mental sanity; he was nearly positive he had not been scratched or hit, but he was unsure. He was pleased to see that there was no damage to his skin suit and so he was quite sure he himself was not infected.

With all of his armor and gear on, he took them from their rinsing and placed them into the dedicated bin that opened up in the wall of the shower unit. This would transport the armor to a cleaning and sanitization unit before being sent to the Lance's barracks where he would get them later. He closed the bin and stepped into the hot shower. The temperature of the water was above what normally comfortable for a regular shower, but in this case, the heat against his skin provided comfort; it was much better than being covered in the gore of the mission. With a long sigh of his stressed nerves, he hung his head as he faced the showerhead to let the warmth of the spray cover him. He spent quite the amount of time letting the water run down his fatigued muscles as he soaked in the therapeutic effects of the steam from the shower. For as basic as this was, it was helping him calm down a bit.

D'rok turned the water off, ending his long calming shower as he stepped out. He took a towel from an automated swivel that extended from the wall. With it, he dried himself quickly before pressing a button on the wall to provide temporary clothes for his size. Much like the towel, a blackened robe came out on a swivel with a pair of boots included. He changed into the clothing and took a cloth bag for his weapons. As much as he would rather hand carry his weapon back to the barracks, but his Carbine was out of ammunition and the shotgun would not be openly permitted within the halls. Instead he placed the weapons and ammo in the bag in such a way he could use the shotgun in case of whatever situation his paranoid mind would craft up. Despite his concern and his vulnerable feeling, the trip back to the barracks was uneventful.

He entered the barracks to see that most of the Lance had returned with themselves cleaned and in their causal clothing. Rtas was not present, which wasn't surprising as he probably was discussing what had happened with the ship master. Everyone glanced up at him in silence as he entered the room. They watched him as he set his weapon bag on one of the center tables of the barracks. They went back to their resting quietness as he walked over to his bunk and changed into casual clothing. D'rok opened his bedside crate and took out his small tool kit before placing the robe and the towel into the barracks laundry bin on his way to his weapon bag.

D'rok sat at the table and pulled out the two weapons and set them on the table. With the shotgun next to him, he set the carbine in front of him and opened his tool kit. Taking one of the few cleaning cloths that were held inside, he began to go through the process of taking off all of the external pieces and cleaning them with great detail. Although this wasn't really necessary, he would prefer not having any indication of the grime and blood that had been dried and plastered to the weapon from the last mission as it would help him forget it; it was the logic of 'a new cleaning, a new likeness.' It was rather a silly superstition of his luck that he seemed to have come up every now and again. The cleaning went on slowly, but it was a job well done. As he was finishing up the carbine, Major Vallumee had come over and sat across the table from him with a small container in front of him. D'rok glanced up at him briefly to see that the Major appeared nervous towards him as if he was taking a leap towards something.

"Are you feeling well now, brother?" The Major asked softly.

D'rok looked back down at the carbine as he began to return and secure the pieces together. "I will beâ€| although I am greatly questioning whether or not I should retireâ€|" D'rok admitted.

"Oh myâ€|" he chuckled. "As sad as that might be, I would prefer that than you shooting up the place, Tallaham."

"I would neverâ€|" D'rok sighed calmly. "And call me D'rok pleaseâ€|"

"Alright, D'rokâ€|" He smiled slightly as he watched D'rok finish putting the weapon together.

"What is your name, Major?" D'rok asked as he tightened the last of the weapon's fasteners.

"I am Noma Vallumee"

"Noma it shall beâ€|" D'rok said as he set his tools down next to his fully reassembled weapon.

D'rok picked up the Carbine in his hands and pressed the weapon's power button just above his upper thumb on the rear grip. The carbine gave a slight whir sound as the several lights appeared down its length. The bolts of the weapon slowly was pulled back fully along the length of both of their respectable barrels before sliding quickly forward. Most of the lights turned green, indicating the weapon was fully functioning properly, yet two on the rear side of the empty ammo tubes stayed red. The carbine beeped a trill of three

to signify it was empty. He turned the weapon off and set it next to the shotgun.

"What are you going to do now?" Noma asked quietly as he opened his container before him.

"Nowâ€¦ I will dismantle and clean this thing." D'rok placed the shotgun on the table.

"You know how to take one of those things apart?"

"Yesâ€¦ a fellow soldier and I were looking for things to pass the time in the field awhile back." D'rok explained. "It's really not that complicated."

"Huh." Noma blinked. "Either way. It is not the strangest thing I have heard or seen today."

D'rok chuckled very slightly as he began to ready himself for the shotgun's disassembly. "Indeed."

"D'rok?"

"Hmm?" D'rok looked up as the small flicker of a flame come from across the table.

"Do you smoke?" Noma asked as he offered an elongated pipe to D'rok.

"Normally no, but after today I think I just might."

"Then feel free"

D'rok took the pipe from Noma and inserted the tip into his mouth. He relaxes himself as he breathed in a long draw from it to let the near blissful smoke enter his lungs. It was not pungent like the tobacco of cigarettes, but rather a smooth and almost soothing cloud that he pulled into his body. With a slow exhale he allowed the smoke to freely exit his nose and his throat until it had fully left him. He took several puffs of the pipe before handing it back to Noma.

"You will know when the effects beginâ€¦" Noma smiled and closed his eyes as he continued smoking. "It should not be long. Just try to relax."

D'rok chuckled slightly as he looked down at the Shotgun before him. With a slight smile he picked up the tools once again.

"I am in no rush." And so he continued his work.

18. Act03 Ch05 High Charity

SGTLEGENDKILLED~

Fate Continuum

Act III

Chapter V

## "High Charity"

H.D. October 19, 2552

D'rok gave a heavy sigh as the bottom of his liquor bottle raped against the metal kitchen counter. He began to calmly unscrew the top of the alcohol container as he looked around at the still foreign kitchen of his temporary residence. While he did not like the idea of renting a home for an entire month and a half, he would still patiently wait for the next Sangheilos bound ship that he could take back to his home. It was just the first step to retirement. Truly, it was not actually retirement, but it was instead his final stepping down from his service to the Covenant. He had had quite the amount of time since his decision on the day that he survived the operation of the Infinite Succor to reflect on what he might do without the military. Yet he had very little he was sure of for when he returned to Zelso. He was quite positive about rejoining Voro's side as a fisherman. Voro was so old now; he could hardly go on boats to begin with so he probably could use D'rok's help once again. Then again, he would rather not think too much about all of that until he actually got home as there was quite a lot of things happening in recent times.

After the survivors of the Lance returned from the Infinite Succor, Rtas had skipped over the entire ladder of command by just going straight to the fleet's Supreme Commander, Thel Vadamee, with the situation of the parasite. From what Rtas had told D'rok, the Supreme Commander had told him that even by the time that they had returned from the lost vessel, there were already identical reports of encounters with the parasite on the surface of the Halo ring. The parasite had apparently spread throughout the entire ring world within just a few hours. Due to the rapid spread, the Supreme Commander had ordered the entire fleet to leave the system to prevent the parasite from reaching the fleet. Unfortunately, as best as the decision was to withdraw the fleet from the ring, this led to the Human forces on the surface to somehow and very unexpectedly destroy Halo.

While the methods or reasons were being kept very hushed among the highest ranks in the fleet, the basic fact that the Halo ring had been destroyed was completely turning the fleet's leaders in their boots. There was rumors floating that there were several of the ship masters who wished to resign from such a crushing blow to their military resume. D'rok felt sorry for whoever had the unfortunate job of informing the hierarchs of what had happened. The Prophets did not take this lightly. In fact, they were relocating the entire station of High Charity to the destroyed ring world to directly investigate the events that led to its end.

In the meantime, the fleet of Particular Justice went through the motions of placing all of its warriors where they belong on their original vessels by a ship by ship basis. When the order was given to pull out, everyone was in a frenzied rush to get to whatever ship of the fleet they could get too. This meant that fixing the errors of the frantiness would take several days amongst itself. As soon as that had been fixed, there was an urgent order from the Fleet of Sacred Consecration for the transfer of Naki Cimutee alone and that they were sending a runner ship, The Mercy and Betrayal, to come and pick her up. D'rok only learned this because K'an had just happened

to be on the ship talking with Naki and Ryau when it left the fleet. This error on K'an's part caused the separation of the only officer in Far Beyond Provocation and as a result of this the kill team had now been officially disbanded. As soon as Rtas had learned of this mistake he had informed D'rok. For what it was worth, K'an and Sig were at least safe; If K'an was going to be on the Prophet of Regret's personal fleet then they would not be seeing much conflict, and Sig has recently been given the opportunity to enjoy some peaceful guard duty around the city of High Charity.

D'rok shook his head as he removed the bottle top after he finished unscrewing it. He gripped the body of the container and began to pour it into a small drinking glass that he had snatched from the cupboard before he had gotten the liquor out. With a decent amount of alcohol for now, D'rok recapped the bottle and returned it to its place. He took the glass from the counter and made his way to the balcony on the side of the second story of the housing complex. After opening a sliding transparent door, he walked out to the grand view of the inner city of High Charity. He gave a soft sigh as he leaned himself against the railing to take in the sights.

High Charity; the Holy City of the Covenant; the Covenant's mobile command center and government capital as a whole. For what it was, it was quite a gorgeous spectacle. The station, being nearly 350km in radius, was large enough to house millions of each of the species that belonged to the Covenant as well as provide the largest manufacturing and maintenance of fleet ships throughout the military. Even with all of these feats under its belt, it still somehow reigned as the state of regality; there was even those who were with the belief that just visiting the city would help one's faith and standing towards the Great Journey. While he was not into the religious side of the station, he could easily see what those individuals would claim that as such. What D'rok was most interested in about the station was its features and history.

The station of High Charity was built on a large rounded off chunk of the home world planet of the San Shyuum, Janjur Qom, when they cracked off the ignition systems of a Forerunner Dreadnought. After the ship had taken off and took a chunk out of the planet, the San Shyuum put two and two together and hollowed out the chunk to eventually be the base of High Charity. After the Sangheili and San Shyuum had their conflict and had formed the Covenant, they parked the Dreadnought directly in the middle of the hollowed out planet chunk and used it as a power source. Due to this, High Charity had not only become the surrogate home world of the San Shyuum, but it also had become the Covenant's capital as an erected monument to peace between the two species. Due to its great importance to such a faction, it was only made of the upmost best luxury in a good percentage of the city. Even the Unggoy, who are responsible for a majority of the fleet's repairs, rearming, and ship building on the station, were fairly privileged to live on High Charity.

D'rok smiled slightly as he sipped from his glass, drinking some of the liquor as he looked over the illuminated city scape that had been built around the base of the Dreadnought. It was truly a gorgeous city. The temperature was kept at around 15 degrees Celsius and the artificial sun that rest on the roof of the hollowed dome was set to run through 11 day long solar cycles. What really sold it was the Dreadnought and the lights of the city; to add to the spectacle, all of the main transport routes ran all perpendicular to the center of

the city, sparking a uniform and almost perfectly planed grid that worked with the massive buildings towards the middle. The flight lanes helped the illusion that the city was larger than it actually was.

His gaze was distracted suddenly by the loud buzzer of the front door. With a sigh he reclaimed his glass of liquor from the railing and made his way back inside and through the house to the front door. He quickly unlocked the door and opened it to see that the one who was buzzing the door was Rtas. With a smile, D'rok opened the door wide for him.

"Hello, D'rok!" Rtas grinned.

"How are you, brother?" D'rok stepped back to allow him entry.

"Oh I am faring well." He said as he came in.

"That is fantastic! I see your face is healing well!"

"Yes, yes. It is and I am doing as well as any one of my position could be." He laughed slightly as he referenced to his recent promotion to Special Operations Commander of the Covenant.

"You knowâ€¦ I think it is a bit ironic of you to get such a position after you killing a San Shyuum just a month ago." D'rok cocked a smile.

"Excuse me, \_Officer\_ Tallaham, but you and I have agreed to not speak on such things." Rtas shot a quite serious look at him.

"I know. I know. I jest." D'rok chuckled.

"Either wayâ€¦" he paused to look around. "This is not a bad place, D'rok. You seem to be doing well for yourself." he admitted.

"I will be much better once I get home."

"I would figureâ€¦" Rtas paused.

"What brings you here, brother? I thought you were going to get quite busy after your promotion."

"Wellâ€¦ yes. Yes, I have been very busy the last few days."

"I assume the hierarchs are jumping you through all of the hoops?"

"Oh yes! Very much so!"

"Then why come here if you are so busy?" D'rok asked, genuinely curious.

"Wellâ€¦ you are one of my best friends, D'rok. I figured I would spend at least a few hours with you before I get too busy to see you for quite some time." He admitted.

"Very wellâ€¦" D'rok nodded. "Would you like something to drink?"

"Yes. Whatever you are having." Rtas answered as he sat in one of the chairs in the living room.

D'rok quickly went about getting him a glass of the liquor.

"I do not understand it, D'rok" Rtas spoke after a quiet moment.

"What do you not understand?" D'rok asked as he began to undo the top of the bottle.

"I do not understand your act of retiring." Rtas paused as he looked back over. "You are an amazing warrior and you have a distinctive ability to lead; you have not hit your glass ceiling and you have many years of life easily within you. Yet you are ending it just because of one bad mission?" Rtas challenged slightly.

D'rok's mandibles quivered slightly at this. "It is really a combination of things, Rtas." He paused. "I would really not speak of it."

"Please do tell me." Rtas pressed.

D'rok gave a heavy sigh. "Rtas, I am much older than I was when I joined. I have been nothing but a well refined killing machine for almost 30 years now, and I do not very well enjoy it." He admitted. "To add to this, I found someone recently, only to have her betray me before leaving without reason. And now there is a body eating parasite running loose within the galaxy that I quite blatantly cannot stomach." He paused as he looked down into the glass on the counter for several moments as he tried to fight his feelings from coming up from his gut. "And besidesâ€¦" He trembled very slightly. "I have been just been waiting for this war to kill me. Since it has quite obviously been failing at that aspect, I wish to retire and continue my life as a fisherman"

Rtas was quiet for quite a bit before giving his reply. "I thank you for the honesty, D'rok."

"You're welcome." D'rok gave another sigh before he resumed fully making up the drink for Rtas.

"I am sorry for pressing."

"It is alright." D'rok took the glass and the bottle of liquor into the living room before sitting heavily next to Rtas.

"It is a strange thing, really." Rtas started as he took his glass. "War will be handled differently from individual to individual. It can easily be forgotten that some of us might even pose the question that they might not be better at anything besides killing."

D'rok sighed heavily as he closed his eyes. "â€¦I find myself asking that quite frequently."

"Wellâ€¦ I would not worry about that, D'rok. What is so bad about having that skill?"

"It is not having that skill that is so bad. It is bad when it's the only skill you have." D'rok nodded slightly.



"D'rok!" Rtas shot a harsh glance at him. "You must stop that talk! I know for a fact you must be skilled at something other than fighting." He snarled in seriousness. "If anything, you have told me that you are quite the accomplished fisher and craftsman."

D'rok got quiet as he thought on this for a good while. "You are rightâ€¦ Sorry for being childish with my feelings."

"It is alright. Unlike K'an, I will not break your stones for it." Rtas chuckled for that.

"I thank you for that." D'rok smiled slightly. "As close as K'an and I are, it is nice to get a break from his relentless jesting."

"I totally understand." Rtas sipped his drink. "By the way, how do you feel about Far Beyond Provocation being disbanded?" he sparked up the conversation.

"It saddens meâ€¦ But then again, maybe it is time to let it rest a while. It has been active nearly nonstop for almost 25 years." D'rok sighed.

"It would be acceptable." He paused. "To be fair, Far Beyond Provocation is one of the best kill teams the Special Operations can offer. It even has the distinctive blessings of the Hierarchs; one of their top choices for when they need a small team."

"Well thanks for the known flattery, Rtas." D'rok rolled his eyes, having heard this before.

"They will surely be lacking without you and your team together."

"I am sure they will."

Rtas once again sipped from his glass before quietly sitting in his chair for a few moments. "D'rok?"

"What is it?"

"What would it take to cancel your retirement?" Rtas asked bluntly.

D'rok scoffed. "A paper job."

Rtas jerked in his seat. "That is it?"

"No."

"Then what?"

"I want a position that has better benefits, pay, and something that won't require me to get killed."

Rtas smiled. "So like a Sub Commander?"

"Wâ€¦ what?" D'rok looked confused at Rtas, taken aback by the response.

"You knowâ€¦ A Lance Commander."

"What does that-"

"I'm offering you a position, D'rok." Rtas cut him off bluntly.

D'rok swallowed. "Rtasâ€¦ I do not think I can accept that offer."

"And why not, D'rok?"

"Because it is not what I wish to do."

"Well it has better pay and benefitsâ€¦" Rtas pointed out with a smirk. "It also has more paper, just like you just mentioned."

"Who would I be even leading?" D'rok asked in disbelief.

"Kusovai's previous Lance."

"Gods, Rtas. No!" D'rok growled at his friend's audacity.

"Why not?!" He raised his voice as if he himself was playful. "They are still without a Commander and I will not give the position to anyone but the best!" He reasoned.

"No! I couldn't." D'rok stood up and paced briefly in frustration. "Absolutely not!"

"Oh please, D'rok. I ask that you at least see what the Lance members will think about it."

"Oh?! You are now trying to snoop so low as to attempt peer pressure?!" D'rok snarled softly.

"D'rok. You say the word and I will have you promoted in just a few hours. There shall be no waiting, no media, and no foul play. It shall be simply and quietly done." Rtas answered quite calmly, knowing full well he had the pull to do just as he said.

"Gods!" D'rok stamped his hoof as he glared at Rtas. Although he was quite against considering it at even the molecular level, that was quite the promotion. The change from Officer to Sub Commander was skipping several hefty paygrades to even say the least. It also would mean he was less likely to be on the front line than he was currently. D'rok growled heavily as he caved in. "Fine. I accept. If and only if the Lance members accept it as well."

"Thank you." Rtas nodded.

"I would also wish that I have complete control on who joins the Lance; I will not have a weak bunch."

"I can guarantee that you will be able to at least choose your Sangheili warriors."

"Fine. Fair enough." D'rok sighed.

"To another day in this life and to good health!" Rtas lifted his glass upwards for a toast

D'rok grumbled and picked his glass up to join the toast. After drinking, he grumbled yet again towards him. "You are lucky the parasite destroyed half of your face, for it not I would be inclined to do it myself."

"Well. As terrifying as the implication is, you and I already have found something far more terrifying than you."

D'rok rolled his eyes slightly. "When would you like me to show up to the Lance's barracks?"

"As soon as you can be ready." Rtas grinned. "I will be escorting you there to make sure that they won't give you too much of a hard time."

"Ohâ€|" D'rok sighed and looked down at his empty glass.

"So hurry up, Sub Commander. I cannot wait forever." Rtas waved him off with a grin.

D'rok sighed in slight distaste as he set his glass on the kitchen counter before heading upstairs so that he could pack. He would not need to pack much more than his only set or two of his casual clothes and his weapons. After he had taken off all of his casual clothing, he pulled out the enclosed crate from the closet of the bedroom. Inside the crate was his previous set of armor; he had not worn the armor since the mission on the Infinite Succor. With a hiss of pressurized air D'rok opened the crate to reveal the armor. As the gear came into view he stopped for a moment as his eyes glanced over the curves of the chest piece. He regretfully reached in and pulled the folded skinsuit that had been placed inside the cavity of the chest piece. He carefully stood with it and began to put it onto himself. Once he had finished putting on the skin suit, he then began to put on the armor piece by piece starting from the floor upwards.

Soon he place his helmet over his head. It was the final piece of something he would have rather not worn again. With a deep shuttering exhale he shook his head; if he was to give the ranks one more attempt, he would give it his best. Maybe he would even actually try to not act like he wanted to die, and this time he would let no parasite would make him waiver in his stance. He turned back to the bed and took his Assault Carbine and placed it on his back before he took his sword hilt from its decorative box and placed it on his hip. With a determined nod to the full standing mirror in the corner, he grasped the strap of his duffle bag and made his way back down stairs to rejoin Rtas.

"Well done, Tallaham!" Rtas beamed as he looked up from the dÃ©cor of the living room. "Your armor looks quite kept for it being in retirement."

D'rok smirked slightly. "You can only buff and wax armor so much within a month."

Rtas chuckled. "You have been that bored?"

"What else was I to do?"

"You could try to find a \_nice\_ lady to settle down withâ€¦"

D'rok shook his head. "After the last one? Absolutely not!"

"Either wayâ€¦ Let us proceed to your new Lance, Tallaham"

With a nod and a smile, Rtas led D'rok out of the house before turning down the walkway that lead to an elevated pathway that connected all of the like styled homes to the one D'rok had been temporarily living in. They took the main elevator down to the street floor where Rtas would hail a private transport to their destination. With a brief period of waiting, the two climbed into the small transport before starting their ride to one of the military sections of High Charity. Despite the company, the trip was quite uneventful. Rtas had already began to type and make calls on his data pad as he was already making motions to promote D'rok's rank to Sub Commander. D'rok was sitting quietly next to Rtas as he watched the lights of the buildings fly by the side window of the transport. Eventually, the military section they were heading too came to view, and just as swiftly as they had been lifted up they were dropped off at the door of the base.

With his bag in hand, D'rok hopped out of the transport onto his hooves. Rtas paid the driver before joining his friend near the door of the base. He made his way to the security checkpoint to inform them of their arrival. Obviously there was no problem to be had with their entry as Rtas' new position left him with quite the sway of power within the Special Operations; if it were put bluntly, he essentially could do whatever he wanted with them now. With the greenlight to enter, he and D'rok entered the base. The two walked at a moderate pace across the main paths to the Lance's barracks; they were occasionally stopped by saluting warriors and other minimal spectator activity. Despite this, it was not long before Rtas was leading him in to the group.

"Warriors!" He barked as he gathered their attention "I have good news! For I have found your new Sub Commander!" He nodded towards D'rok who stood beside him.

D'rok felt all of the eyes of the small Lance move onto him with very mixed expression. For the four Unggoy that were together, they seemed quite pleased that such a veteran of a status as D'rok; but for the Sangheili, the worried and almost disgusted looks on their faces weighed heavily upon him. Of the three Sangheili, he noticed Noma, who surprisingly still with the Lance, and a Minor weren't so visually disgusted. The one remaining Major however gave quite the audible scoff at the implication as he glared at D'rok.

"I trust that you will all respect him as you respected Sub Commander Kusovaiâ€¦" Rtas expressed as he shot a glare towards the Sangheili Major. "Is that understood?"

He received a quick murmur of agreement.

"Very wellâ€¦ I must attend other tasks." He spoke as he glanced at his data pad. "Good luck, Sub Commander." He gave nod to D'rok before leaving.

It was hardly a lengthy moment before the Major, being the highest ranked Warrior in the room under D'rok, took a step forward. "Soâ€¦"

He started with a grimace. "You are the new Commander of this Lance?"

D'rok tensed up as he shook his head slightly. "It would appear soâ€¦"

"Greatâ€¦" He scoffed. "Now I am to be led by a cowardâ€¦" He muttered under his breath.

Everyone in the barracks watched the Major leave the room in an aggravated huff. Normally D'rok would have snuffed that behavior out immediately, but for now he wished to not be too abrasive to this Lance. For now he would try to tread with them lightly. To ease the confrontation slightly, he dropped his bag onto the floor next to him. He stood before them with his arms crossed as he looked over them as he began to read their stance on all of this.

"I understand there will be some animosity between all of you and myself. However I would like to move forth that we have all been through quite a lot already; our nerves have been tried through the same fire and chaos." D'rok paused to give himself to choose his words right. Speeches were hardly his strong point. "Despite any grievances we have towards one another, I promise on my life that I will do everything in my power to ensure our success and survival in the field." He exhaled sharply. "Do any of you have any concerns?"

Noma, clearly not having much issue with anything, spoke up. "Do you feel as if you are ready for this, D'rok?"

D'rok nodded slightly. "This will be a much larger group than I am used to leading, but I feel like I should do just fine."

Noma smiled as he took a step forward. "Then what would you have us do, Commander?"

"I would like for you all to get to know me." He smiled. "We have already spent a few days with each other, but I would like all of you to be open with me as much as you feel comfortable with; I do not mean to state the obvious, but we will work better with one another if we all are at ease and open with each other."

"Yes sir!" The Sangheili Minor called out in unison with the Unggoy beside him.

"Thank you." D'rok smiled. "I also must ask: Will the Major be an issue?"

"No sirâ€¦" Gre'toy, the most robust of the Unggoy, spouted out. "Major Daphakee is a nipple baby who sucked a salty batch!" His crude comment was met with some giggles from the other Unggoy.

"Very well then, I shall not worry of him." D'rok uncrossed his arms and picked his bag up from the floor. "Now if you will excuse me. I am going to arrange my quarters."

The rest of the day was pretty low key for D'rok and the Lance. With the exception of the Major's rather stale return later on, everything was with ease and matureness. D'rok went about talking with each of the warriors to learn their names and to get to know them a bit.

Of the Sangheili Warriors, Noma Vallumee was the one that D'rok knew the best. Noma was a major hailing from Moram State. As he was when they first met, Noma had always been very friendly with D'rok on all of their encounters. The two had a great mutual respect for one another due to each of them having vast experiences in their own aspects; while D'rok might have been better in combative know how, Noma was more of a tech and a medical worker. Even if they did not see eye to eye on something, Noma was always there with his herbs to settle their differences in a puff of herbal intoxication. Even those mentioned disagreements were sparse as nothing truly seemed to bother him.

The youngest of the Sangheili was Semie Sojum'ee. He was a Minor from Zin State who seemed to care greatly of fulfilling the wishes of whoever may be his lead. He had just recently showed high promise in his Special Operations Academy, so much so that Kusovai had directly plucked him to be in the Lance. This may have been to Kusovai's very obvious fetish to the art of sword wielding, something that Semie was also quite adept at. While he was polite and soft spoken around D'rok, he expected no qualms with his command of the Lance. Semie was without a doubt a crucial piece to the group as D'rok remembered him as being quite admiral in combat on the Infinite Succor.

The oldest and most abrasive of the Sangheili warriors was Major W'aht Daphakee. He had little respect for D'rok as he had been convinced that D'rok was a coward from what he had seen on the Infinite Succor. He hardly would give any time of his day to speak with D'rok and so he spent as little time as could around the barracks. The miniscule time he was actually around he had placed himself on his bunk as he read his data pad. D'rok could care less, in his opinion W'aht was just a stuck up warrior who had turned down numerous promotions. While he may have been skilled in close quarters combat, he was still hardly anything above the run of the mill jerkoff with a superiority complex.

Of the four Unggoy, the one that D'rok knew the greatest was Gre'toy. He was the only surviving member of the Lance's Heavy Weapons division. Being as well off as he was and being of a decent age for his kind, Gre'toy was very experienced in combat in terms of Unggoy. He even had a small arsenal of trophy weapons to show for it; a small handful picked from this list was his MA5B, a single M6E, and even one of the Human rocket launchers. As intriguing as this list was and while he might not be able to use them hardly, D'rok was sure that it was quite an impressive roster of tales to be told.

The highest ranked of the Unggoy was Jajar Benks. He was a young Major, who enjoyed sleeping and eating a tad too much. Not so much that it would damage his health, but defiantly enough to be noticed. He was a decent warrior; he followed orders well and found great enjoyment in pleasing the Sangheili in the Lance.

After everyone had become officially acquainted, the rest of the night was decently low-key; there was some slight celebration for not only D'rok's promotion but for the commander position being reclaimed within the Lance. There were a few drinks shared and some specialty food provided at his expense before everyone calmed down for the night. In the morning D'rok took them to the nearest mess hall for breakfast and ate with them instead of eating with the rest of the Officers. Like before with his kill team, he had always strived to be

as close to his warriors and so that trend would live on for him. Besides, it always lead to knowing what was going on in their personal lives while giving some entertainment. Dedicating yourself as such on a personal level was key for being a great leader for any team of people.

After they had finished eating they returned to their barracks to relax until D'rok could find where they would be assigned to next. As of now it would prove a bit troublesome to get assigned to a fleet ship as Supreme Commander Thel Vadamee was soon to be tried against for the loss of the sacred Halo ring. There was much buzz floating around not only in High Charity, but throughout most of the Covenant's fleet. The trial was to happen this morning within the next few hours, so there would be no task completed until that was at least through. D'rok had just kept everyone in the barracks so that they could watch it without having to fight for a space to somewhere else, and so they had set up chairs and other furniture to watch.

Once it was time Semie turned on the main display in the barracks as everyone gathered around in the common place to watch the trial. The screen turned on immediately to the Council Chambers where the High Prophet of Truth and Mercy were physically present. The council members were still entering in their balconies on either side of the chambers as the hologram of Prophet of Regret came into view next to the other two Hierarchs. The feeling of dread and conflict could be felt through the screen; no one wanted to go through with this day. This was one of the most high profile trials within the recent era of the Covenant; an Admiral being charged with failure to protect sacred technology and heresy. Losing the Halo ring to the Humans was clearly detrimental to the entire structure of the Covenant and though no one wished to point fingers, someone was going to be put on the spot.

Despite the implications being tossed around by the politicians, the trial was going to begin soon. Like clockwork, the Honor guards who stood post on either side of the walkway from the door to the stand before the hierarchs stiffened as a trio of Jiralhanae entered the room as they escorted the Supreme Commander towards the Hierarchs. At the lead of the escort was none other than Tartarus, the Chieftain of the Jiralhanae. As the escort of apes reached the stand, Tartarus presented the Supreme Commander to the hierarchs. With grimaces that could be seen through the broadcast, the Counselors and the Hierarchs glared down at the stand.

The Prophet of Truth was the first to speak. "Supreme Commanderâ€¦ You are here today on the charges of High Treason and Insubordination. Depending on your rebuttal to these charges and your sentences may be dropped or lightened. Now speak. What happened after you left the vermin's planet?"

Thel looked up sharply at the tip of his nerves. "There is not much to be said, Hierarchs. The Humans somehow destroyed the sacred ring."

"How many ships did they possess?" Truth asked him.

"There was only one ship."

"One?" Truth asked as if confused. "Are you sure?"

"Yes!" Thel visibly gulped. "They called it the Pillar of Autumn."

His answer was met with the murmuring amongst the councilors on either balcony.

"Why was it not destroyed with the rest of their fleet?!" Mercy demanded as he slammed a fist on the arm of his hover chair.

"It fled!" as we set fire to their planet, but I followed with all of the ships in my command." Thel nervously attempted to defend himself.

"When you first saw Halo were you blinded by its majesty?" Truth asked with a bit of a scathing tone.

"Blinded?"

"Paralyzed? Dumb struck?" Regret challenged finally.

"No!"

"Yet the Humans were able to evade your ships, land on the sacred ring, and desecrate it with their filthy footsteps!" Regret shouted, clearly upset.

Thel stood his ground as best as he could. "Noble hierarchs, surely you understand that once the parasite attacked-"

His point was swiftly cut off by the spectating councilors who were stricken with an upheaval of unruliness. It would seem as all of the conflicting that everyone had been over in terms of the trial was coming out and beginning to be shown. This of course played heavily on Thel. Even as he stood firm and strength, his skin was wet with a sheen of the sweat of his nerves.

"There will be order in this council!" The eldest Prophet of Mercy yelled out in anger at such an upheaval.

Truth cut in once the crowds had been calmed. "You were right to focus your attention on the flood, but this demon; this Master Chief!"

"By the time I learned of the demon's intent, there was nothing I could do." Thel quickly attempted to defend himself.

His words were met with harshness as one of the San Shyuum councilors screamed out the word 'traitor!' This led to the entire pair of balconies to erupt in chaotic bickering once again. The reaction clearly pierced Thel's fortitude; even in the distance from him to the camera, his quivering mandibles were visible. One of the few who were glaring at him with a wide smirk was Tartarus who was clearly enjoying the falling Commander as he watched with his arms smugly crossed. As the crowds eventually rolled to a softer volume, the Prophet of Regret seemed to quietly confide with the other two Hierarchs as if they were figuring the outcome of the trial. After the three had finished, Truth quickly waved the rest of the noise from the chamber.



"You are one of our most treasured instruments." Truth stated as he moved forward towards Thel. "Long have you lead your fleet with honor and distinction; but your inability to safe guard Halo was a colossal failure."

"Nay!" At this point someone took their chance to shout from the balcony "It was heresy!"

Thel grimaced and strengthened his stance. "I will continue my campaign against the Humans."

"No, you will not!" Truth declared.

With their decision made now, Tartarus gave a loud barking command to his pack mates who quickly made a grab at Thel. With all of the remaining integrity and pride he could muster, Thel shrugged off the Brute's grasp, opting that he would walk himself to whatever fate awaited him. With heavy hooves, he turned and began to carry himself with the escort of Jiralhanae. As he drudgingly made his way from the Hierarchs, Truth motioned forward after him slightly before giving a closing word.

"Soon the Great Journey will beginâ€¦ but when it does the weight of your heresy will stay your feet and you shall be left behind."

The broadcast switched to black at the end of Truth's words. The suddenness left the Lance in silence as they all considered what had happened. It was an uneasy and unsettling experience.

"Do you think the Supreme Commander is a heretic?" Gre'toy asked as he looked up at D'rok from his chair.

"Of course notâ€¦ We all know what had happened on that ring. The parasiteâ€¦" D'rok words stopped in his throat. He knew he didn't have to explain; they all had lived it. "Noâ€¦ I do not."

It was only a short bit before the broadcast clicked back on to show the Council Chamber balcony. This ceremony clearly had become quite the ordeal as there were crowds amassed in every spare meter to view the Balcony. Tartarus, after looking around and smiling at such a gathering, escorted his pack mates as they lead Thel towards the ceremonial lip of the Balcony. Without any snarled barks or growls of command, his pack began to place Energy Restraint Cuffs on Thel's wrists. The cuffs were rendered taut as his arms were held upright; the convicted Sangheili visibly gave a quick tug in vain to test the stiffness of the cuff.

After Thel had been hooked up and bound by the cuffs, an arc of electricity quickly formed from the cuffs to the pillar on either side of the balcony. Thel visibly strained from the current; his fists swiftly clenched as his body convulsed and shook against the restraints. While he gave only a grunt and a soft growl, the pain and distress could be seen in his face.

After several minutes of the electrocution, he had received minor skin damage and his the vibrant color of his armor had been scorched to a dark gray. Thel looked quite stricken by the electrocution, his demeanor and integrity had clearly taken a beating; his arms looked tired, his shoulders no longer held any defiant tautness, and his fists were not quite as clenched as they had been. The most

nauseating part of it was that it could easily be seen that he knew that the ceremony was far from finished. Tartarus, who seemed greatly pleased at how the punishment was going, decided to pause the process to give a few words.

"There can be no greater heresy!" He yelled over the near silent crowd who were watching the spectacle. "Let him be an example for all who would break our Covenant!" With that he turned towards his pack mates and gave a loud commanding bark.

Once the Jiralhanae were given the word to continue, they quickly made pace as they began to rip Thel's armor off piece by piece. Of course they were sure to be as rough and as jarring as they possibly could be. As they took each section of the armor off, they also removed his skinsuit in tattered tears. Eventually, after yet another few minutes of removing the majority of his armor, one of them tugged Thel's helmet as they threw it heavily onto the floor. By this point he looked quite broken, any fight that he had from his small amount of integrity had been sapped from his muscles. He could do nothing against this and he knew it. Now his body clearly reflected it; his head hung limply from his shoulders as he looked down at the metal floor under his hooves.

Pleased with the visibly broken Sangheili in the restraints, Tartarus was now ready to begin the final segment to the ceremony. With another command he turned to the center pedestal on the balcony as a ceremonial metal staff began to rise from the floor. This was the brand that bore the Mark of Shame, though seldom used, the sight of such an item would instill fear into most warriors throughout the Covenant. Now it was going to be used on the great Thel Vadamee, one of the most important Sangheili to the Human Covenant war, and the Kaidon of his state. With the brand in his grasp and a grin of malevolence, Tartarus approached Thel aggressively. Thel looked up timidly with nauseating fear at the branding tool; he knew the worst was now to come.

Driven by vicious malice, Tartarus forcefully thrust the red hot brand against Thel's bare chest. Even before the brand had touched him, Thel struggled one last time against the restraints. His face jolted immediately to panic as his skin began to burn under the fiery metal; his mandibles twitched drastically as his eyes darted around in a frenzy. Unable to physically handle such pain, he looked upwards before letting out a wailing scream of agony. The broadcast continued showing the blissful grin that Tartarus held as Thel continued to scream.

D'rok's stomach churned as he looked away from the screen. He remembered when he had received his mark; the smell of his burning skin and the fiery sensation of his skin being scarred into form from the mark of uncertainty rose from the deep corners of his memory. He looked down at the scar that lay half hidden by the plate of armor on the back of his hand as Thel's screams continue to emit from the broadcast. Unable to further endure the experience, D'rok quickly grabbed the remote to the screen and turned it off. This left the barracks silent as the Lance stared the blank screen before slowly shifting their view to him.

"That is enough of that." D'rok quivered. "I refuse to listen to a broken man's cry for several minutes. It is not something that should be openly viewed in scrutiny by the public." D'rok swallowed heavily

as he realized his breathing had drastically quickened; his hearts thumped loudly within his chest. "If you have any issue with this, then you may leave and go watch it somewhere else." D'rok coldly turned on his heel before retreating back to his office.

## 19. Act04 Ch01 Sig's Island

SGTLEGENDKILLED~

Fate Continuum

Act IV

"\_The Broken Wolf Pack"\_

Chapter I

"Sig's Island"

H.D. 9:55 p.m. September 20th, 2552

Sig looked past his hoof on the edge of the Phantom's floor at the water that moved swiftly below. He was with many questions and even as he tried to find ways to sooth such concern, he was without words. He had lost all forms of rest after the crazy event that was D'rok's wedding. That bitch had betrayed his greatest friend and mentor in the whole galaxy and no one had suspected it. M'riana had seemed so nice to Sig up until that moment, they had even spent multiple hours talking about how to craft the best dishes for the home kitchens. The worst part of it was the effects that it had on D'rok. K'an of course would be just fine, but D'rok had clearly taken a drastic blow.

D'rok was by far one of the strongest and most loyal Sangheili Sig had ever grown to know. Even when they first met, the two had become great friends; so much so that he would have trusted ten of his lives in D'rok's hands. He had never wavered, never faltered, and never seemed to be bothered by anything that the Humans or their war would hand to him. Sig wondered if his problem was his uncommon actions of lending his loyalty and trust to others. M'riana was one of the only females that D'rok had been with in the nearly three decades that Sig had known him. He wondered if it was a fact that D'rok was quite particulate in his choice of women. Maybe it could even be that he, like Sig, had other secluded preferences. This however, Sig figured was unlikely. Whatever it may be was irrelevant. What had taken place was in the past and the effects were now in motion. D'rok had left the kill team to join the ranks of one of the larger Lances that were under direct command of Rtas in order to get his mind off of things and K'an was laid up once again in his hover chair no thanks to M'riana and Ryau's wonderful mass.

Sig felt a little betrayed himself at this though betrayal was a bit harsh of a word. It would be more suitable to say he had felt abandoned; he was without his leader and sense of direction. Far Beyond Provocation would be put on hold. He knew it would happen, even despite the fact that K'an had now taken the spot of the kill team's 'officer.' K'an was no leader; he could lead, yes, but he greatly lacked the patience and calculation to command a Lance or even small squad of warriors. Maybe as time would continue on he

would prove Sig wrong on this, but for now K'an seemed way too dependent on women, alcohol, and his scathing, never-ending sense of humor. Sig would not push blame at either one of them; time had become tedious and harsh in recent years. He felt that it would be perfect if they could possibly retire together after this or the next tour of duty. D'rok would return to being a fisherman for Voro, K'an would return to work at Arica Armories, and Sig would most likely return to Varo to make something else of himself. As much as he missed his mother, he would not return home because of his overly aggressive and highly opinionated father. He might start a bar or some fancy caf  in the middle of Varo. There was always good real estate by the downtown markets that he so favored.

"Major. What would you like us to do once we land?" One of the two Minors on the craft interrupted his thoughts.

"Do not worry, youth. I will give you orders on the ground." He answered softly.

"Very well, Sir." The young Minor saluted before turning away.

Before he walked away, Sig stopped him. "Minor?"

"Yes, sir?" He turned back mid stride.

"Relax. I have no doubts that you and your friend will give me exactly what I need." Sig smiled slightly. What Sig really needed however was a sweetheart of a strong male who would gift him with warmth and creamy drinks as he read on the comfort of his own couch.

"Of course." He nodded before returning to his space.

Sig chuckled slightly as he looked back out of the open side of the Phantom onto the ocean below.

He was now on his way to one of the small islands located in one of the oceans of the ring world. His mission was to lead a team of warriors onto said island to clear it for the arrival of Naki who was going to be researching some potentially important Forerunner facilities. He only took on the task because the Supreme Commander of the Fleet directly asked him and because it would help Naki on one of her tasks. And so he was now leading a pair of Sangheili Majors, two Sangheili Minors; seven Kig Yars, four of which were Minors; and ten Unggoy, three were Majors. The team was to secure the island for Naki's small research team. He unfortunate part of the mission was there were three directives from two sources, both the Supreme Commander and The Prophet of Stewardess. It was very confusing and it clearly was stemming from some bureaucratic mess that was much higher than Sig's paygrade would allow. He would just do his best to follow the orders until Naki arrived to give better words to follow. This was precisely why he turned down promotions; he hated the paperwork that Officers had.

He took a deep breath of the moist air and smiled, the salty air reminding him of Varo. Despite the hatred he had for such a task, he could always take away it would be the fact he could get off of the fleet and get the privilege of seeing such a place; a sacred Halo ring. It was like that of a myth that he never expected to see with

his own eyes. Though he truly questioned his standings with the Great Journey due to his romantic preferences, it was simply breathtaking to see. He was certain there were hundreds of warriors wishing to tread the surface back with the fleet. The trip had not been long but so far it had been a gorgeous experience, this was a sacred ring after all. How terrible could it be?

The Phantom, with its escort of two Banshees piloted by the Sangheili Majors, eventually made it too the small island. From the map scan that Sig had been given and by his visual deduction it was an island that consisted of a gathering of cliffs of an uneven plateau. The cliffs were surrounded on all sides by a beach that would prove decent freedom of view in all directions. The only other thing that stuck out was the two large Forerunner structure that was built out of either side of the island.

"Pilot! Set us down on the top of the island!" Sig yelled towards the cock pit.

With a new order, the pilot began to slow the transport down over the top of the island. As they did, Sig could see that there was a dead end canyon that had been carved into the middle of the island from one of the beach sides. The canyon led to a flat Forerunner surface entrance. Sig readied himself by the open starboard side of the Phantom as he watched the ground begin to get closer.

"Majors! You are to stay in the air and patrol around the island until I say otherwise!" Sig ordered over the comms piece. "The rest of you be ready for landing. Keep you weapons at the ready! This location is to be treated as hostile until proven otherwise, understood?" Sig barked at them with a voice his typically would not find himself using.

He turned to see all of the Lance snap to attention before rushing towards the open sides of the craft. They were quite a lively bunch and they seemed to wish to do a job well done. Sig wondered if he had come off as too intimidating. This was far from his intent, but if that was the reaction for him not even trying to give such a front, he would continue as such. It felt good to be vocal.

"Exit the transport, Warriors!" He yelled as the Phantom came to a low hover just above the ground.

The Warriors quickly began to exit both sides of the craft, Sig leading the exit as he should. The landing zone was quickly cleared and as soon as it was rendered safe, Sig began to give new orders to them.

"Kig Yar Majors!" Sig barked. "I want you to take the Kig Yar Minors to the top of the other cliff side. Sangheili Minors, you will split the Lance evenly and run a quick sweep of the canyon and the surrounding exterior of the island. One squad will go down the incline down to the canyon floor and the other will take the incline face to the beach." He watched the Kig Yars sprint off swiftly to fulfill their orders. "Sangheili Majors! You are to provide cover for the Kig Yars and the other squads."

His commands were all met with 'yes sir's and several 'of course's as the Warriors broke off quickly to clear the island.

"Pilot!" Sig spoke off comms as he returned to the inside of the Phantom.

"What is it, Valhamee?" The Sangheili Pilot answered as he looked out of the cock pit.

"Park the Phantom so you and I can offload the crates."

"You and I?" The Pilot asked confused; Officers not directly unloading a craft was unheard of.

"Yes. Let us get to work."

The two quickly began to offload the cargo of the Phantom as they waiting for the squads to report back to them. As they were setting the last crate onto the grass, the Kig Yar teams came rushing back to report that the ridgeline had been cleared. Sig directed them to join the two squads to help secure the island faster. It wasn't before long until the squads finished their searches and found nothing. As they began to return, Sig called the Banshees to land and soon the entire Lance had regrouped with the reports of a clear island. With the words of the secureness of the island, he called in the green light for Naki's transport.

"What shall we do now, sir?" One of the Minors asked.

"I would like you all to split up into patrols that will circle the perimeter of the island. While one is on the North beach the other would be on the South and vice versa." Sig explained with his hands. "I would like the Kig Yars to patrol the cliff tops overlooking the beaches; Kig Yar Majors should take beam rifles for such a task. Miss Cimutee is going to be here soon and I wish that the island is as secure we can make it. While we are not allowed to go into the Forerunner facility, we can do our best on the surface. Understood?"

They all nodded and moved off to get to their tasks. It was not before long that the Pilot received word that the Spirit with Naki's group was soon to land, and only a few minutes such a pronged craft would come into view. The craft came to a stop over head as the pilot directed the Spirit to where it would need to go. Once the Spirit had been directed, it began to move towards the Forerunner facility, where they would land. As it did, Sig began to jog towards the location to meet them. He radioed one of the patrols to meet him there and met them there as the Spirit was finally easing in for a landing.

Sig caught his breath quickly as the side door of the Spirit lowered so the occupants could get out. Naki was the first to get out only to be followed immediately by Ryau and one of Naki's younger associates who was a part of the Special Science Ministry. Her name was Alea Venika, who was a ditsy female who had been laying occasionally with K'an. Sig really didn't care much for her; she was an airheaded female with too much of her brains placed in her large rear instead of her skull.

"Hello Naki." Sig smiled as the three approached him. "I have explored the majority of the surface of the island with my Lance and have deemed it to be safe, as you requested." He beamed at a job well done.

"Thank you, Sig." She replied. "Have you seen any ways into the deeper structure below?"

"Negative." Sig frowned. "We were told not to venture below the first level of the facility as per previous orders. I know things changed when you took over but there was no change to that standing order." He paused briefly in thought. "We did not want to upset you so I decided to follow the original orders."

"Okay, we'll get started right away." She said as she looked around at her surroundings. "I want you to divide your Unggoy into three teams and send them over to the other structure, Alea will lead them there. You, Ryau and I will take your Kig-Yar down into this one, understand?" Naki looked towards the Ocean as if she had heard something.

"Yes. Yes of course." Sig went to his comms piece to begin to change the order of his forces around. He stopped however when he heard a faint rumbling in the distance towards the sea "Do you hear that?" He asked as he looked towards the direction, perturbed.

As if on cue, four Human Pelican dropships maneuvered around another smaller islands in the distance. Their flight path seemed rushed and determined as they aimed their noses directly towards their locations. Sig had barely had the chance to yell for everyone to get to cover before the nose mounted weapons of the olive colored dropships began to wildly spray at the group. As they charged on their strafing they somehow failed to hit anything effectively in their vicious overhead path.

Sig stood up with heavy breaths as he went to their comms piece. "Are those transports going to circle around?!" He called out to anyone who was watching them cross over their island.

"No sir! It looks like they are continuing towards another group of islands." One of the Sangheili answered.

"If they begin to return alert me immediately!" He ordered.

"Yes sir!"

Sig lowered his hand from his comms piece just as Naki began to give him further orders.

"Change of plan, Sig!" She began as she straightened herself from cover of one of the Spirit's prongs. "I want all your forces on patrol up here. I don't want any Humans interfering with us down in the installation below."

"Consider it done!" Sig responded as he turned to the squad that was with him. "Minor!" He motioned to the Sangheili of the squad. "Take one of the Unggoy and see to it that the motion trackers and radar equipment is set up." The Sangheili minor and took one of the Unggoy as he left. "I want three volunteers from the other patrol to give those two help. I want this island blanketed, Warriors!" He shook his head and looked back to Naki's team.

"Alea, Ryau, let's head inside." Naki told the two as she pulled a field pack and data pad from the Spirit. She then pointed to the

Unggoy beside Sig. "You three, take the cart and start delivering the cargo crates into the structure below."

As the Unggoy began to work, Sig moved around to inform the Spirit pilot on where to park his transport. This was of course after getting a quick log of his name for roster purposes and making sure he was not in need of anything short of what supplies they had whether it be water or rations. By the time he had returned to the front of the prongs of the Spirit, Alea, Naki, and Ryau had left for the unexplored Forerunner structure.

Sig gave a sigh and leaned against a wall. With a tired grimace he rubbed his face briefly before he looked up to watch the Unggoy as they took Naki's crates and equipment into the structure piece by piece. To help pass the time, he switched his comms piece to the other nearby channels of the other islands not too far from theirs. His feelings were slightly eased as what he heard. There was a near constant chatter of infantry mobility and of the Humans from the quad of dropships assaulting their island. There was even some mentioning of a Demon being deployed there. Sig feared that they might come for this island next, however it would be unlikely as this island was much smaller than that one was. There was nothing that was going to happen here. As he switched his comms piece back to his own channel, he looked over to see Alea coming back up to the landing pad.

"Is everything alright, miss?" Sig asked curiously as she looked rushed.

"Yesâ€¦ I just forgot my data pad on the Spirit." She answered as she passed him to return to the transport.

The sound of a loud blaring tone rang out from unseen speakers around the island. The sound was piercing enough to make Sig jump. As he looked around confused, the sounds of multiple doors from within the facility closing heavily could be heard. He tilted his head in utter confusion before his comms piece chirped.

"Sig!" Naki spoke over the comms, sounding nearly as confused as she was. "What happened up there? I think the security system was activated."

"I am not entirely sure... but I am hearing reports that the Humans are attacking the teams on the other island." Sig paused for a moment to swallow. "Why, what happened down there?"

"Of course it would be the Humans..." She mumbled softly before sighing. "The door locked behind us, Ryau and I are stuck in a ramp room."

"Is there anything we can do to get you out?" He asked her.

"Alea may be able to get through the doorway. The security may not be too hard." Naki said. "If there was a terminal on this side, I would do it myself."

"Alright, Naki. I shall send her your way as soon as she gets herâ€¦" He paused as he sighed in annoyance. "Data padâ€¦" He sighed before looking up to Alea. "Miss!"

"Yes?" She leaned out of the Spirit as she finally got her data



pad.

"Naki needs you to open the doors that just closed down there as soon as possible. Get too it, please."

"Very well." She put some hustle into her pace and moved back towards the facility doors.

"Seriouslyâ€¦" He groaned softly as he reached into one of his armor packs to retrieve his pipe. "How in the Gods do you forget that?" he then ended his broadcast on his comms piece before pulling out his little click lighter to light the pipe. He gave the nicotine herbs a puff to kindle a burn before taking a blissful inhale. "This mission is going to be the death of meâ€¦" he groaned.

## 20. Act04 Ch01 Sig's Island II 'TOR'

SGTLEGENDKILLED~

Fate Continuum

Act IV

Chapter II

"Sig's Island II 'The Owners Return'"

H.D. 1:30p.m. September 21th, 2552

Sig stirred from his sleep as the sounds of a pair of Unggoy that were restless in the night could be heard a few meters from where he was. He had not wanted to sleep while on this mission, but with the planet blocking the solar system's sun, he could not have prevented himself nod off with his back against one of the supply crates near the camp. Before the night had come, the Lance had set up their main portion of camp on the top of the cliff next to the parked Phantom transport. The Lance had designated those who would patrol and who would sleep in terms throughout the day so that there was not just the motion detectors and radar systems on the lookout.

Throughout the rest of the daylight, the Lance, with Naki's permission of course, had explored more of the top level of the Forerunner facilities. While the one facility entrance on the other side of the island was sadly sealed from some mechanical issue, there was still much to see within the one that Naki and her group had entered. Sig even had the chance to surprise Naki with his knowledge of the Forerunner language. He had learned the language from the text of the many books on such scientific things that teased his interest. In fact, he had spent the majority of the afternoon reading the texts around the facility as his forces casually patrolled the Island.

The only other thing of excitement was the exchange that Sig had the pleasure to have with the mission handler. After the Humans attacked the other island they soon left it for no apparent reason. In case the Humans were to return, he had requested more equipment and troops to protect the island. They denied this request only to grant the request partway after some arguments had taken place. The mission handler decided to allot two Type â€" 26 Anti-Vehicle Stationary turrets to the Lance. This was barely changed until Naki had her own

heated exchange with the handler as well; it seemed like she and her team had discovered a maintenance way and needed more troops to accompany them. By the end of it, everyone was given the bare minimum of what they had wanted. Sig received the two Shades and Naki received only half of her requested reinforcements.

The Lance had set the two Shades on either side of their encampment as this was the only place Sig could think to put them for the moment. Naki took her fresh group of Warriors onto the Spirit only to fly the transport into the Forerunner ground access that was in the middle of the canyon of the island. After Naki and her team left the day was nearly over and the planet soon blocked the solar system's sun from the sacred ring. With them absent, Sig had joined the Pilot and the two Majors up at the camp to exchange war stories over the small camp fire they had built. Sig, having sat against one of the crates, had dozed off just briefly after he had begun to get into one of the Major's tales.

"Major Valhamee." One of the Majors shook him from his sleep.

"What?" Sig groaned "What is it?"

"The motion sensors are seemingly quite active."

"How?"

"It is easier to just see than explainâ€¦"

"Fine." Sig groaned as he got up slowly from the ground. "Show me."

The Major quickly took Sig over to a screen that was sticking out of one of the electronics crates. The screen, being set to show every sort of movement that was being made within nearly a kilometer of the island, was being brightly lit up under most of the span of the island. There were so many red dots in places that they formed into solid forms of the color.

"Could it be a malfunction?" Sig asked immediately.

"No." He answered. "I sent the other Major to check on the sensors; they are all working correctly."

"Could we have set the aerial sensors too high?" Sig asked nervously.

"Noâ€¦ The signatures first appeared underground about 15 minutes ago."

"And they have stayed there?"

"Yes, leader." He nodded before watching for Sig's direction.

Sig quivered slightly before he turned to put his finger to his ear. "Warriors. I want all of you to make your way to the open Forerunner site. Set the light stands facing into the entrance; we may have visitors." He lowered his hand and looked back at the Major besides him. "Come with me."

Sig picked up his Plasma Repeater before walking off towards the other side of the clifftop. With the Major in tow, he was looking to get to the bottom of whatever was preventing him from sleeping, no matter how weird or dangerous it may be. The fact that he had never seen such a display of color on any motion screen did bother him quite so however.

"Could it be Humans?" Sig asked quickly.

"I greatly doubtâ€¦ The signatures are moving too fast and are too numerous to be Humans."

"Then it must be some sort of animal." Sig helplessly suggested.

"I hopeâ€¦"

"We will know certain soon enough."

By the time the two had made it to the entrance of the Forerunner structure, most of the troops had already gotten there and had turned the light stands at the entrance. The others were soon to join just after Sig and the Major had reached the rest of them. Everyone seemed on the edge of their nerves. The suddenness of the call to arms during such a quiet and peaceful night was enough to have such effect. However, it was not until a loud, distant wail cried from within the facility that the Warriors were truly stricken at the nerves.

"Be at the ready, Warriors." Sig called out in the chilled air nervously as he raised his weapon towards the door.

The amount of signatures on Sig's motion tracker increased swiftly with every passing moment. Sounds of many rushed footsteps from within the facility's open doors grew slowly from the silence. With those approaching sounds grew the noises of wailing growls and shrieks that would chill the most abrasive warriors to the bones. Sig's knuckles were pale and his arms were shaking as he tightly clutched his Plasma Repeater; whatever was coming up from down below was not Human.

With the sinister unnatural wail of evil, a sudden massing of freakish gurgling creatures began to come from the entrance. The creatures easily had caught the Lance by shock and managed to charge their flailing forms several bounds from the entrance before anyone had even fired their weapons. Once the first bolts of plasma had been sent towards the freakish creatures, the rest of the Warriors held no regard for their line of fire as they began to dump all their arsenal could give at the monsters. Too much of their misfortunes, their weapons hardly seemed to make much of an impact on the horde. The creatures could even somehow handle the powerful particle bolt of a Beam Rifle. The shots would just go straight through their torsos and do seemingly nothing to them in the process. The creatures continued to charge on as they went for the closest things they could wrap their flailing limbs around. It was hard to even describe the creatures with all of the flood lights and the bolts of plasma and the speed at which they moved. It was like watching a horror film rendition of several species mutated almost to beyond recognition. In between the large creatures were small, nearly squid-like creatures that would bounce lightly about towards the nearest non-monstrous thing. The Unggoy were quick to fall from the larger forms of the

mutants, two of the three of the Kig Yars were rendered incapacitated as the smaller squid-like creatures latched onto their bodies; with each one that would attach, the Kig Yars would seem to begin to scream as their own body would begin to shift and contort in unnatural ways.

"Retreat!" Sig screamed at the top of his deathly frightened lungs to the rest of the still fighting Lance. "Get back to the Phantom!"

Despite such a dishonorable command, the remaining three Sangheili, Kig Yar, and Unggoys needed not be told a second time for such an order. The still living turned swiftly and broke into flee mode as they sprinted as fast as they could for the incline that would lead to the clifftop above. With their feet on the rise towards the cliff top, the Sangheili and Kig Yar did their best to provide suppression behind them so that the few Unggoy behind a slight chance of escape, the creatures were proving to be too fast to even begin to hinder from the sluggish Warriors. They were doomed to fall. Realizing this, Sig made an off-the-cuff decision.

"Leave them!" He shrieked in terror over his hot weapon. "We need more time and they will slow them down!" He discharged the heat of his Repeater before continuing his shooting. "Pilot! Start the Phantom \_now!\_"

The rest of the Warriors finally reached the top of the incline. Even as they began to sprint across the top of the plateau, they would regrettably realize that the Unggoy had hardly slowed the creatures. Sig ordered the Warriors to all throw their grenades down the path in hopes to add even more time to their swift evacuation. This proved to be more effective than leaving the Unggoy to suffer. Given this slight cushion of time, the Warriors focused on sprinting still Phantom that was already beginning to warm up from its cold engines. They reached the transport where the rest of the Lance had run too at the sound of the retreat. Now with all four Sangheili and the five remaining Kig Yars regrouped with him and as firm as they could be now, Sig would attempt to lead his small force to holding off the creatures long enough for the transport to take off.

As two of the Sangheili manned the duo of heavy shades on either side of the camp, Sig watched as the horde of mutants breached the top of the incline to the plateau. The moment that they were visible, the air was yet again pierced by the sounds of a small arsenal being fired off wildly. The two Shades and the combination of many Beam Rifles helped keep the horde back much better than before. Sig had hardly even noticed that one of the Sangheili Majors had taken a Fuel Rod Canon from inside of the Phantom as the other manned the bayside turret. It was quite a lot of ordinance being used by such a small group of Warriors, and Sig was quite thankful for the extra turrets that he had requested from the fleet.

Despite the larger and more efficient weapons, they still were not enough to completely stop the horde from streaming onto the clifftop. They just seemed to be endlessly fed from down below and even if the weapons were enough, they would be depleted of ammunition as time would burn on. With such a supply of creatures, the horde eventually pushed on and began to push closer and closer to the transport.

The Phantom was finally the thing to break their bad streak of luck

as it had warmed up quite quicker than it should have. As soon as the engines gave the welcoming blast of escape, Sig yelled that everyone needed to get onto the transport. Everyone on the ground began to get onto the transport as the two Sangheili dismounted the Shade turrets. As Sig and the closest Warriors boarded, they turned to see that the creatures had, due to the absence of the Shade bolts and a few less Beam Rifles being fired at them, advanced much quicker than moments before. By the time that the creatures reached just a few bounds from the transport, there was still the two Sangheili who were trying to make it from the Shade turrets and a single Kig Yar who was trying his heroic best to provide suppression.

"Take off now!" Sig yelled for the Pilot.

The Phantom's engines jolted harshly as the craft began to lift. In a grave attempt to save at least one more Warrior, Sig had reached out and gripped the lone Kig Yar, a T'vaoan, by the cuff of his armor only to snag him forcefully into the troop bay. The transport lifted sharply, leaving the two Sangheili screaming for just one more moment to get on. Sig, who was still at the ready at the troop bay, watched as the Major on the ground quickly accept his fate as he activated his Energy Sword to fight off the creatures; the Minor was had been at just the side of the transport and had jumped only to get his bare grasp on the edge of the troop bay.

Sig was quick to move and grip the Minor's arm to try to pull him in against the excessive gravitational forces brought on by the lifting Phantom. The Minor struggled as he took tight hold of Sig's arms. Too much his dismay, several of the squid creatures had latched onto the Minor's back just as he had jumped. The Sangheili began to scream as the creatures dug into his flesh through his skinsuit and even his armor. His limbs began to twitch and his skin began to turn patchy and discolored as his screams began to shift and match the tone of the creatures below. Sig watched in horror as several tentacles began to swiftly protrude out of the Minor's body. The Minor's eyes shifted slowly from the panicked, terrified eyes he had as he had worn for several moments, into dark, ghastly beads that coldly glared into Sig's lifelessly. With a quivering sense of personal morals, Sig let go of the Minor, letting the shifting form to fatally fall to the ground below; He was a Sangheili no more.

Sit sat there on the cold floor of the interior of the Phantom as it continued on its speedy path from the island. He was at a loss; he had never seen such an event before, and this scared him dearly. He was brought to tears by the fact that even after his many decades in the military, and after many years with D'rok and K'an, nothing had been as horrifyingly terrorizing as whatever had come up from the depths of that facility. It was then that Sig realized that the promises that the Prophets had told the Covenant were quite possibly too good to be true. None of his reading and listening had ever said anything about this. Even as the side hatches of the transport closed and hissed loudly as they sealed closed, he felt no safety here; this holy ring was far from sacred.

End  
file.